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CONTENTS

Articles

Hugh B. URBAN, <i>Elitism and Esotericism: Strategies of Secrecy and Power in South Indian Tantra and French Freemasonry</i>	1
Todd GIBSON, <i>Notes on the History of the Shamanic in Tibet and Inner Asia</i>	39
David FRANKFURTER, <i>Apocalypses Real and Alleged in the Mani Codex</i>	60
Russell KIRKLAND, <i>The Sun and the Throne. The Origins of the Royal Descent Myth in Ancient Japan</i>	109
Lucinda DIRVEN, <i>The Author of De Dea Syria and His Cultural Heritage</i>	153
Mahinda DEEGALLE, <i>Buddhist Preaching and Sinhala Religious Rhetoric: Medieval Buddhist Methods to Popularize Theravāda</i>	180
Ronald C. KIENER, <i>Gushist and Qutbian Approaches to Government: A Comparative Analysis of Religious Assassination</i>	229
Axel MICHAELS, <i>Gift and Return Gift, Greeting and Return Greeting in India. On a Consequential Footnote by Marcel Mauss</i>	242
Martin BAUMANN, <i>Culture Contact and Valuation: Early German Buddhists and the Creation of a 'Buddhism in Protestant Shape'</i>	270
Eric REINDERS, <i>The Iconoclasm of Obeisance: Protestant Images of Chinese Religion and the Catholic Church</i>	296

Review article

Manfred HUTTER, <i>Religion in Hittite Anatolia. Some Comments on "Volkert Haas: Geschichte der hethitischen Religion"</i>	74
--	----

Conference

BEYOND PRIMITIVISM: INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND MODERNITY, <i>A Conference held at the University of California, Davis, 1996</i> (Jacob K. OLUPONA)	323
---	-----

Book reviews

Gerdien Jonker, <i>The Topography of Remembrance. The Dead, Tradition and Collective Memory in Mesopotamia</i> (Jan ASSMANN) ..	91
Friederike Fless, <i>Opferdiener und Kultmusiker auf stadtrömischen historischen Reliefs</i> (Jörg RÜPKE)	95
Andrew Weeks, <i>German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein</i> (Hans G. KIPPENBERG)	96
Klaus K. Klostermaier, <i>A Survey of Hinduism</i> (Knut A. JACOBSEN)	97
Maria D. Reis-Habito, <i>Die Dhāraṇī des Großen Erbarmens des Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara mit tausend Händen und Augen</i> (Hubert SEIWERT)	99
<i>Recent Studies on Religions in Africa</i> (Jan PLATVOET)	100
Peter Kingsley, <i>Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition</i> (Guy G. STROUMSA)	211
Jean Kellens, <i>Le pantheon de l'Avesta ancien</i> (Michael STAUSBERG)	214
Shaul Shaked, <i>Dualism in Transformation. Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran</i> (Manfred HUTTER)	217
Laurie L. Patton (Ed.), <i>Authority, Anxiety, and Canon. Essays in Vedic Interpretation</i> (Rein FERNHOUT)	219
Dieter Harmening (Ed.), <i>Hexen heute: magische Tradition und neue Zutaten</i> (R.J.Z. WERBLOWSKY)	222
Robin Hägg (Ed.), <i>Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence</i> (Christoph AUFFARTH)	346
Vasudha Dalmia and Heinrich von Stietencron (Eds.), <i>Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity</i> (Knut A. JACOBSEN)	347
<i>Publications received</i>	104, 224, 349

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ELITISM AND ESOTERICISM: STRATEGIES OF SECRECY AND POWER IN SOUTH INDIAN TANTRA AND FRENCH FREEMASONRY

HUGH B. URBAN

Summary

Despite the proliferation of interest in the subjects of secrecy and esotericism throughout popular culture, media and entertainment, these phenomena have only recently begun to be treated seriously by historians of religions. In this essay, I suggest a new way of looking at esotericism by engaging in a comparative, cross-cultural analysis, and by looking in particular at its social and political implications. Specifically, I compare two traditions—the Śrīvidyā school of Indian Tantra, and the Rectified Scottish Rite of French Freemasonry—juxtaposing and analogically relating them in order to shed new light on both. Contrary to many popular conceptions, I argue that *esotericism is by no means primarily a “counter-cultural” or “subversive” phenomenon*; rather, *it is very often an elitist phenomenon*, the province of highly educated, affluent and powerful intellectuals, who wish, not to undermine existing social structures, but rather subtly to reinforce them, or else to bend and reshape them according to their own interests. This essay examines three primary strategies employed by the Tantrics and Masons: 1) the creation of a new social space or private sphere, which promises “equality” and liberation for all classes, while at the same time constructing new and more rigid hierarchies; 2) a hermeneutical strategy, which appropriates the authority of traditional scriptures, while at the same time asserting the superiority of esoteric exegesis; 3) a ritual strategy, which creates a homology between the body of the initiate, the hierarchy of the cosmos and the hierarchy of the esoteric sect, inscribing the individual into the body of the order, and inscribing the order onto the human body.

It is perhaps only fitting that the phenomenon of “esotericism” should remain one of the most-persistent and pervasive, and yet also most poorly understood and most frequently distorted, aspects of the history of religions. Derived from the Greek term *esoterós*, esotericism refers to what is “inner” or hidden, what is known only to the initiated few, and closed to the majority of mankind in the exoteric world.¹ In the past several years, there appears to have been a grow-

ing fascination with the tantalizing regions of the unknown and the occult—not only in academic disciplines, but also in popular entertainment, media or novels such as *Foucault's Pendulum*. Yet despite this growing interest, the subject of esotericism remains poorly understood and theoretically confused within the academic community.

There are, of course, many fine studies on specific esoteric traditions, such as the work of Gershom Scholem, Frances Yates, Antoine Faivre, André Padoux, and many others on the traditions of Kabbalah, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Tantra, Sufism, and various pre-modern “secret societies.” Yet what is still lacking, I believe, is any broader cross-cultural and comparative framework; nor has there been adequate attention given to the concrete social and political role of the esoteric traditions within their historical context.² Among the few historians of religions to examine the subject of esotericism cross-culturally are Mircea Eliade and Kees Bolle; but on the whole, the remarks of both Eliade and Bolle remain disappointingly general, universalistic, and largely divorced from social and historical context.³ Even Antoine Faivre’s extensive work on the subject, while probably the best that is presently available, takes virtually no account of the very real social and political contexts in which esoteric traditions emerge, and with which they are inextricably intertwined.⁴

In this essay, I wish to suggest a new approach to the phenomenon of esotericism by placing it within a cross-cultural framework, and by focusing specifically on its socio-political implications. In so doing, I am by no means suggesting a kind of heavy-handed Marxist interpretation; rather, I am simply arguing that, by definition, “secrecy” and “esotericism,” have very real and very direct social and political implications (i.e., the distinction between those who know and those who do not⁵), and that if we ignore these dimensions, we are overlooking an extremely significant aspect of this complex phenomenon. Specifically, I wish to compare two of the world’s most sophisticated esoteric traditions: the Śrīvidyā school of South India Tantra, specifically the school of the 18th century south Indian Brahman, Bhāskararāya, and the Rectified Scottish Rite of French Freemasonry, founded in Lyons in the 1770s. I have chosen these

two examples, first of all, for the pragmatic reason that they are among the few esoteric traditions about which we have a reasonable amount of reliable primary and secondary textual material. Second, they are especially clear illustrations of the esoteric/exoteric dichotomy and the Janus-faced attitude which I wish to examine here.

Most importantly, I will argue against many popular interpretations—such as that of Edward Tiryakian and others—which regard esotericism as a “counter-cultural,” subversive or revolutionary phenomenon.⁶ I wish to show on the contrary that esotericism is very often an *elitist* phenomenon: it is the province of highly educated, affluent and powerful intellectuals, who do not wish to over-throw the existing religious and political structures, but rather, either to *reinforce* them or else to *bend and reshape them* to suit their own private interests. As distinguished from the more general category of “secret societies,” the esoteric tradition is based on a central Janus-faced identity or a clear split between the esoteric and exoteric realms: it allows the individual to live a seemingly orthodox, traditional, conservative life in the outer social world, while at the same time, leading a secret inner life, often involving powerful heterodox or even antinomian esoteric practices.⁷

Before examining these traditions in detail, I would like first to address two basic methodological issues. First, there is the fundamental problem involved in attempting to study a *secret* organization, a tradition which practices *active dissimulation* and intentionally lies to outsiders. Here I wish to employ some of the insights of Beryl Bellman, who has criticized most past theories of “secrecy” like that of Georg Simmel or Edward Shils.⁸ Following Bellman, I suggest that we shift the focus of our analysis away from the “content” or “substance” of secrets (which is ultimately unknowable, if indeed, there even *is* one); instead we should turn to the more fruitful question of the *forms* through which they are exchanged—that is, the *strategies and tactics* (to use the terms of Pierre Bourdieu) through which secrets are concealed and revealed, to whom, in what contexts and through what relations of power they are exchanged.⁹ Lamont Lindstrom, in his work on the Tanna peoples of the south Pacific, takes

this argument yet a step further: using Bourdieu's economic language, he suggests that what is important about "secrets" is not the hidden meanings they profess to contain, but rather, the complex "economy of exchanges" or the "marketable value" which secrets have as a commodity of knowledge and power within a given community.¹⁰

The second methodological question is, why do a comparison? Following J.Z. Smith, I suggest that the value of such a comparison is much the same value that we gain from a good metaphor, in Max Black's sense of the term: by bringing together and juxtaposing two different, previously unrelated things, we can gain new insights into both.¹¹ I am by no means searching for some universal archetype or deeper identity; rather, I am simply employing comparison as a pragmatic tool or heuristic device, which can help us to see new things that would otherwise go unnoticed. Nor will I be engaging in a simplistic point-for-point comparison of similar doctrine and content; again, I wish to shift the basis of comparison away from the level of content and instead to that of *strategy*, or the tactics for manipulating these doctrines and practices in relation to specific social or political interests.

This paper will be organized around three primary strategies employed by the Śrīvidyā Tantrics and the Scottish Rite Masons. First, the creation of a new, esoteric social space; second, a hermeneutical strategy or a style of reading sacred texts; and third a ritual strategy, which is enacted through secret initiation.

I. Constructing a New Private Sphere: Strategies of "Egalitarianism" and Re-Hierarchicalization

The first strategy I will examine here is the creation of an alternative social sphere: this is a double-edged strategy, which, on the one hand, offers the vision of an egalitarian social order, free from all hierarchical divisions of class and sex, while on the other hand, it also establishes new, more complex and at times more rigid hierarchies of authority.¹²

Among the many schools of Indian Tantra, the Śrīvidyā or "Auspicious Wisdom" is one of the best known and most powerful.¹³ This

tradition, which emerged during the 7th century in South India, spread as far as Kashmir and came to full flowering in the 18th century, is distinguished by its specifically orthodox or Vedic (Vaidika) brand of Tantrism. It respects the outward, public side of the mainstream Brahminical tradition, while at the same time asserting the superiority of its secret tradition. In fact, as Douglas Brooks has suggested in his study of the Śrīvidyā tradition, many South Indian Brahmins became especially interested in the rituals of Tantra precisely at a time when Brahminical power was being threatened by the rise of bhakti and Śāṅkara Vedānta. For Tantra opened up a secret realm in which Brahmins could retain their traditional power and privilege, yet without losing their orthodox authority in the exoteric social sphere. Hence it not only “reinforces the Vedic hierarchy of privilege” but also “*reorders* it to suit the changing situation of classical Hinduism;”

Tantric ritual and ideology continues to provide a means by which brahman society perpetuates the perception of itself as privileged in the midst of radical social and economic changes that do not always privilege brahmans.¹⁴

Perhaps the greatest name in South Indian Tantra was Bhāskararāya, a highly respected, wealthy Brahmin of the mid 18th century, and the son of a minister at the court of Bijapur. After studying both the Vedas and the Tantras in Varanasi, Bhāskara returned to the South, where he was favored by the Maratha King, Seforji of Tañjavūr, and granted authority over a large village.¹⁵ A prolific writer, he was famed for his great knowledge of the Vedas and enjoyed a large and wealthy patronage. Yet simultaneously, Bhāskararāya also believed that the true essence and inner core of the Vedas was not orthodox tradition, but rather a body of secret Tantric texts; and he developed an ingenious method of esoteric hermeneutical strategies, which serve to appropriate the legitimating authority of the Vedas, while at the same time, asserting the ultimate superiority of his own Tantric teachings. Bhāskararāya himself was an active Tantric practitioner, who engaged in secret rituals involving forbidden substances, such as meat, wine and sexual intercourse with low class women.

On the surface, Śrīvidyā Tantra might appear to offer a new kind of egalitarian, antihierarchical social ideal: it opens its rituals to women,

sudras and non twice-born castes, in some cases allowing them to read even the most sacred texts of the Veda. Within the secret space of the Tantric ritual, there is no distinction of caste or sex, for here all divisions are transcended in absolute unity: In Bhāskararāya's words: "A slave, a fisherman, a cheat, every living being is the Self of all. . . One who has done what is to be done in all respects, if he leaves his body in the house of a butcher or in the holy city of Kāśī, there is no difference: he is liberated while yet living."¹⁶

But paradoxically, despite this apparent ideal of 'equality,' Bhāskararāya was by no means a revolutionary or a subversive. On the contrary, not only was he a high-class brahman, but he was also very much interested in preserving the traditional privileges of brahminical religion. If caste hierarchies can be transcended in secret ritual, they are enforced and even reinforced on the exoteric level of social interaction. Moreover, even though the Tantras proclaim that women as well as men have the authority to practice their esoteric rituals, this gender equality is actually rather superficial: Idealized in secret ritual, women continue to remain subservient and powerless in the rest of social life: As Brooks comments, "Women . . . are made subordinate to males, and their ritual role is . . . limited to . . . being a partner for male adepts."¹⁷ Much the same may be said for the professed equality of castes, and the seeming liberation of low classes: they are used primarily as *tools* to enhance the power of high class tantric practitioners in esoteric rites, and rarely find any real equality in the world of social interaction. "This egalitarianism does not . . . extend to the social field," Padoux comments, "Even though Tantrism is . . . notable for transgressive practices in violation of caste . . . it does not appear at all socially egalitarian, and still less revolutionary."¹⁸ The Tantric initiate, in short, seeks to maintain a delicate and ingenious double-norm. By means of this "dual edged strategy for living in both Tantric and Vedic worlds" he can retain his authority and legitimacy in the outer social world, while at the same time cultivating a supremely powerful and liberated esoteric identity.

Despite the obviously vast difference in social and historical context, I wish to suggest that a very similar strategy is at work in

the Rectified Scottish Rite of French Masonry. Although there is enormous debate over the origins of Freemasonry, most scholars agree that it grew out of the guilds of “operative” stone masons in 17th century Europe. As Frances Yates and David Stevenson have shown, sometime in late 17th century England and Scotland, the Masonic lodges began to be infiltrated by non-practicing or speculative masons—largely aristocrats and high bourgeoisie, who sought, and often purchased, the prestige that came with being a member of the brotherhood. Having bought their way into the older guild structure, this socially ambitious group of Enlightenment gentry and wealthy bourgeoisie transformed it according to their own interests.¹⁹ In her study of Masonry and European politics, Margaret Jacob follows the lead of Jürgen Habermas, arguing that the lodge became one of the most powerful new “social spaces” of the Enlightenment: it opened up a new social sphere, beyond the bounds of ordinary society, for the free interaction of learned and wealthy men. But the new speculative lodges, Jacob concludes, were inherently Janus-faced: on one hand, they were a primary vehicle for the rising new intellectuals of the Enlightenment in their quest for social power; they helped to cultivate the values of the Enlightenment, “to civilize, to teach manners, to augment the harmony of civil society.” But on the other hand, they were also a means of reinforcing the traditional privileges of wealthy aristocrats of the Ancien Régime—privileges which were being threatened more and more toward the end of the 18th century.²⁰

In the late 18th century, particularly in France, the speculative lodges began to incorporate an increasing amount of magical and occult symbolism, drawn from the esoteric traditions of Kabbalah, Hermeticism, Templar lore, alchemy and Rosicrucianism. The full flowering of this mystical-magical side occurred in the highly ornate, ritualized orders of The Grand Lodge of France, The Grand Orient and above all the various Scottish Rites.²¹ Among the many Scottish Rites—which have little whatever to do with Scotland—one of the most sophisticated was the Rectified Scottish Rite. As Faivre and Le Forestier have shown, the Rectified Scottish Rite was founded in the 1760’s by a group of high bourgeoisie and aristocrats in Lyons, and

inspired by a mysterious Jewish convert to Catholicism named Martinez de Pasqually (b. 1727?). With his complex mixture of Jewish Kabbalah, alchemy and Masonic lore, Pasqually professed to reveal the true inner secret of the Christian tradition, which had been covered over and distorted by the priesthood of the Catholic Church; he then created his own esoteric brotherhood, known as the *Élus Coens* (from the Hebrew, *cohen*, or priest).²² Pasqually's teachings were later continued by his greatest disciples, Louis-Claude de Saint Martin and Jean Baptist Willermoz, the founder of the rectified Scottish Rite, which flourished in Lyons, Bourdeaux, and Marseilles. Disgusted with the frivolity and lack of discipline in the lodges of his day, Willermoz set out to construct a reformed, re-organized Order—*le Rite Écossais Rectifié*—which would convey the “rare and important truths” and esoteric doctrines” veiled behind Masonic symbols.²³

The following of the Rectified Rite was primarily a mixture of upper middle class and aristocratic members—an exclusive circle of “nobles, officers, clergy and prosperous bourgeoisie,” who formed an “elite religion reserved for aristocrats” distinguished from the “religion of the masses.”²⁴ Saint-Martin, for example, came from a very wealthy aristocratic family, and had enjoyed a prestigious career in the military.²⁵ Willermoz, on the other hand, was born a petit bourgeois merchant, with little social status; however as his biographer Alice Joly points out, he found in the esoteric world of Masonry and secret initiation an immense new source of status and prestige. For he was now the possessor of an ancient and priceless body of secret knowledge, which was in fact very highly esteemed in the eyes of the French upper classes and aristocracy of his time. “A very powerful idea had captured him: *the prestige of Masonic secrecy*. The silence that guarded each of its institutions seemed to conceal a *deposit of important, and therefore desirable, knowledge*.”²⁶ Not only was he patronized by Charles of Hesse, Ferdinand of Brunswick and other powerful European princes; but more importantly, after the French Revolution had destroyed his previous wealth, it was largely his esoteric knowledge and Masonic prestige which allowed Willermoz to

rebuild his status in Lyonnais society. By the end of his life, Willermoz was one of the most respected figures in Lyons.

It is surprising that this . . . merchant in silks . . . was not distinguished by his importance in industry or by his social activities, but by his knowledge of occult doctrines and by the important role he would play in the Masonic secret societies of the 18th century.²⁷

As Le Forestier suggests, Willermoz, like other members of esoteric circles of his day, was thus able to live a kind of “double life”—on the one hand, a prosperous merchant and a devout Christian, well-respected in his community, and on the other hand, a master of arcane and occult knowledge, highly respected within a hidden, esoteric and elite brotherhood:

Willermoz was a curious person because of a double nature which he had assumed since youth. . . This merchant of silk garments was to most citizens a well known businessman, upright in his affairs, handsomely enriched by his commerce, an excellent Christian. . . But there were also . . . Masons who knew him to be a very learned Brother, the chief of a group which was important because of the mysterious knowledge it cultivated.²⁸

The writings and rituals of the Scottish Rite, like most Masonic literature, are filled with the rhetoric of equality, universal brotherhood, and liberty from all class distinctions. This is one reason that Freemasonry has often been accused—generally falsely—of collaboration in the French Revolution and other subversive activities. “Cosmopolitanism and natural equality are the obligatory themes of all the harangues of the lodges.”²⁹ Willermoz, in particular, wished to restore the true “Masonic humanitarianism, mystical fraternity, and charity,” which he believed was at the heart of the Scottish Rite. In Masonic rhetoric, the lodge brings together the most noble and the most humble, the highest class and the lowest, uniting social extremes.

Freemasonry . . . is a universal alliance of enlightened men, united to work for the perfection of humanity. . . It is not a religion in the strict sense of the word. But more than any other institution its effect is to unite men.³⁰

(Indeed, we may note that some of the French orders of the late 18th century even began to allow women to join their ranks, proclaiming the equality of both sexes within the sacred space of the lodge).³¹

However, despite this rhetoric of harmony and unity, the lodges were usually far from egalitarian. The members of the Rectified Scottish Rite were in fact quite conservative in their political views, and many of them, like Saint-Martin, openly opposed the French Revolution, which destroyed their elite social and financial status. Willermoz himself suffered terribly from the horrors of the Revolution, which destroyed both his material prosperity and much of the esoteric tradition he had sought to construct: “the Revolution overturned his life, destroyed the lodges, decimated the Masons;” indeed, “he had suffered enough during the Terror to remain a faithful member of the *Ancien Régime* under the Restoration.”³²

Contrary to any sort of democratic ideal, the Scottish Rite is a clear illustration of a theme common to all the lodges: the love of hierarchy, reverence for superior authority and elaborate systems of promotions and advancements. As Le Forestier remarks, there is little basis for the idea that the French lodges promoted a revolutionary spirit in politics or an abolition of social barriers; “on the contrary, the French lodges were—in the full sense of the word—conservative both politically and religiously.”³³ Far from being on the forefront of liberal democratic politics, they were on the contrary much more commonly rooted in the hierarchies of the *Ancien Régime*. “French freemasonry reveals a movement dominated by aristocrats. . . . The French aristocracy had more privileges to protect, more at stake in any reformist vision of a new social order than almost any other elite in western Europe.”³⁴ The Masonic writings are filled, moreover, with disdain for the ignorant masses outside of their elite brotherhood—called “the profane” or the vile common populace. (Indeed, it appears that even those lodges which included women within their ranks did so only in order to refute the charges of homosexuality which were frequently aimed at them by their critics.) As Jacob concludes, “Although they spoke of all brothers as equal this did not obviate the role the lodges played as places that replicated hierarchy;”

Fraternal binding obscured the social divisions and the inequities of rank and degree endemic to the lives of men who embraced 'equality' and 'liberty.' In making social divisions less obvious the idealism of freemasonry ironically served to reinforce them . . . they obfuscated the real divisions of wealth, education and social practice.³⁵

II. Stolen Lightning: Esoteric Hermeneutical Strategies and Occult Exegesis

The second strategy employed by the esoteric sect is a hermeneutical one, a tactic of self-legitimation by way of scriptural hermeneutics: their goal is to re-interpret the traditional texts and meta-narratives, in order to prove that they contain a secret kernel which has been hidden throughout history, but which has been passed on to a select group of esoteric initiates. This is a strategy of legitimation by appeal to ancient authority, what Daniel O'Keefe has called a strategy for "stealing the lightning" of sacred texts:³⁶ it is an ingenious double-edged strategy which, on the one hand, appropriates the authority of the revealed scriptures, while, on the other hand, asserting a deeper esoteric teaching, which transcends the outward 'letter' or 'husk' of those same scriptures. Hence, it is also a formidable source of symbolic power. As Lamont Lindstrom has argued, the possession of "secret knowledge" represents an important kind of "symbolic capital," in Bourdieu's terms; to hold the secret of authoritative texts and traditions is to hold the key to a network of power relations, defining the status of those who possess secret knowledge and those to whom secrets may be revealed.³⁷

Bhāskararāya, as we have seen, was very learned in the Vedic traditions, and highly respected as an authority on the orthodox interpretation of the Vedas. But at the same time, unbeknown to most of his contemporaries, he also believed that the true essence of the Vedas is not the orthodox teaching, but is rather the secret doctrine of the Tantras. He even suggests that some Tantric wisdom is already hidden within the Vedas—though concealed at a purely esoteric level: "This has not been expressly stated in Vedic passages, as it is naturally understood. Still it has been shown in Tantric lore."³⁸ Such

implicit meanings are in need of a special interpretation, which can only be done through initiatic gnosis; for “one needs the interpretive insight of the initiated . . . adept to reveal the Veda’s deeply secret intended meaning. . . Tantric wisdom . . . is encoded within esoteric Vedic sources.”³⁹

Not only did he re-interpret the Vedic texts, however, but Bhāskara-rāya also defended certain Tantric texts—above all, an esoteric work known as the *Tripurā Upaniṣad*—as being revealed scripture (*śruti*), having the same origin and the same inherent authority as the Veda itself. The *Tripurā Upaniṣad* was claimed to be part of both the *R̥g* and *Atharva Vedas*, while at the same time having the sacred efficacy of both a Tantric and a Vedic text. However, only one who has been initiated and instructed in the esoteric knowledge of the Tantras can discern the pure kernel of the scriptures from the mundane, worldly chaff; and only he can rank them according to a graded hierarchy of truth, extending from the ultimate level of Tantric empowerment to the relative levels of orthodoxy and ritual purity.

The Vaidika Tantric legitimizes Tantric practice by establishing continuity with the Veda. . . Tantrics create several interpretive strategies to relate Tantric and Vedic traditions. . . Their overall strategy is to rank . . . the contents of Vedic texts. . . They then distinguish the esoteric elements that deal with liberation and worldly empowerment, . . . from those rituals that are meant for the less qualified.⁴⁰

Now, the key to all these esoteric hermeneutical strategies is a new interpretation of the “metanarrative” of sacred history itself. For it is because of these degenerate, degraded times in which we live that it has now become necessary to reveal the most rapid and expedient—but therefore also the most dangerous—path to salvation, which is contained in the Tantras. Previously the Tantric teachings had been hidden implicitly within the Vedas, but now, because human beings have sunken to such a bestial level, it is necessary to proclaim them explicitly. Here, the Tantrics are exploiting a very ancient Indian theory of history: the descending cycles of the Yugas, which finally sink to the worst, most chaotic age of the Kali Yuga. However, the Tantrics have also very skillfully reinterpreted this traditional meta-

narrative and turned it to their own advantage, to justify their own unorthodox practices: “non-Tantric Hindu interpretations of the Veda . . . fail to meet the needs of the degenerate Kali age. . . As a remedy Tantrics teach the necessity of . . . esoteric (*rahasya*) forms of knowledge.” And precisely because they are so rapid, so dangerous and potentially destructive, these teachings must be revealed only in the carefully controlled ritual environs of the Tantric hierarchy.⁴¹

Perhaps the very heart of this esoteric re-interpretation of the sacred Scriptures is a re-telling of the creation narrative itself. The esoteric initiate knows the secret meaning of the creation of the world, which is contained in only a veiled and obscure form in the Vedas. In the Śrīvidyā school, which is closely related, philosophically, to the highly sophisticated metaphysics of Kashmir Śaivism, the Ultimate Deity from which all things have been created is the female Goddess—Śakti, Devī, Śrī or Tripurā, the Goddess of the three Cities or Worlds, who pervade the gross, subtle and supreme planes of existence. Out of the primordial unity of the Great Goddess, which is Pure Undifferentiated Consciousness (*Samvit*), two basic principles devolve: the female and the male, the active and the passive, called Śakti and Śiva, who embody the two basic aspects of Consciousness: Pure Light or Awareness (*Prakāśa*) and its reflection or self-awareness (*Vimarśa*).⁴² The erotic union and dialectical interplay of these two principles gives birth to the illusion of the created world (*Māyā*, *Prakṛti*), with its myriad dream-like forms. It is within this world of illusion and multiplicity that we finite human beings are also enmeshed; however, because all things have been generated out of the supreme energy of Śakti, which derives from the Great Goddess herself, we still contain within ourselves a hidden spark of this Absolute power and freedom of Pure Consciousness (*Samvit*):

Śiva and Śakti . . . stand in relation of *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa*. . . *Vimarśa* [is] the spontaneous vibration of *prakāśa*, which gives rise to the world of distinctions. . . Prakṛti or *Māyā* is . . . the substance of Śakti under whose direction it evolves into the material elements. . . The individual, under the influence of *Māyā*, looks upon himself as a free agent, and it is only the knowledge of Śakti that leads him to liberation.⁴³

Now, the strategic function of this kind of esoteric exegesis is twofold: first, by reserving its contents solely for the initiated few, it serves to construct a body of rare, exclusive and therefore extremely valuable, knowledge, a very precious “commodity” of information—the possession of which bestows enormous prestige and “symbolic capital” upon the initiate. Second, it then legitimates this knowledge by presenting it as the deeper, hidden and true core of the exoteric Scripture, at once connected to, yet more profound than, the outer revelation.

Like the Tantras, the Masonic texts unanimously assert that they represent a secret and profound teaching, passed down from initiate to initiate from the most ancient times; and much like the Tantrics, many Masons also claim to know the innermost secret of the Holy Scriptures themselves. In their highly imaginative attempts to “establish a pedigree,” the Masonic historians trace the tradition back to certain legendary or Scriptural events, such as the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, the Pyramids in Egypt, the Knights Templars or the schools of Pythagoras and Hermes. Some take this still further and proclaim that Masonry represents the universal, common essence of all religions—Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, alike. In the “Mystico-Masonic legend of the occult tradition,” elaborated in the Rectified Scottish Rite, this secret history is traced back to the Temple of Solomon, recounting its original construction by the architect Hiram in 960, its destruction in 587 by Babylonians, its reconstruction by Zorobabel, and finally, the transmission of its esoteric secrets through the later traditions of the Templars.⁴⁴

Within the present-day Masonic tradition, God has now seen fit to reveal this universal religion, which has been hidden since the beginning of the world, but which now must be made known due to the extreme circumstances of the present age. According to Saint-Martin, “The Catholic Church has completed its mission; its time is over,” and the time has come for “the revelation of an ideal Christianity.” Because the exoteric Church has grown corrupt and full of sin, it is necessary to restore the true teaching of Christ through esoteric initiation: “The Church now only possesses a degenerate religion. It

has placed an idol on the throne of God . . . the theosopher must not reveal the great secret. . . He must halt the fool at the threshold of the temple and retire with his initiates behind the veil of the sanctuary.”⁴⁵ True knowledge is both easily profaned and potentially destructive; thus, it must be the secret possession of a select few. It must be made deliberately hard to find, a scarce and precious commodity, which can be attained only through the proper hierarchies and initiatory grades:

Paradoxically, secrecy and obscurity become an essential part of the struggle to unlock secrets. Simple literal language is too . . . vulgar to convey great truths. . . Alchemical, Rosicrucian and astrological literature . . . is incomprehensible not through the inability of the authors to express their meaning . . . but through their desire . . . to make them hard to find, only discernible to the adept prepared to struggle to comprehend them.⁴⁶

Within the Rectified Scottish Rite, the most profound secret, and heart of this occult hermeneutics lies a new interpretation of the cosmogony and the structure of the universe. Martinez de Pasqually (whose teachings were later passed on and elaborated by Willermoz and his disciples), claimed to have learned through direct personal experience the true secret of the Book of Genesis and the innermost meaning of the Creation narrative itself. His most important treatise, the *Traité de la Réintégration*, “seeks to be, in the manner of the Zohar, an esoteric commentary and a pseudo-historical complement to the Pentateuch,” which retells the story of the creation of the world and the fall of man from a theosophical point of view.⁴⁷ Indeed, not only did Pasqually assert that he knew the true meaning of the Bible, but he also claimed to hold the secret of the true nature of God and the creation. Borrowing heavily from Kabbalistic tradition, mixed with Gnostic and Hermetic elements, Pasqually tells us that God is not simply a Trinity of Person who created the universe out of nothing. Rather, the universe has emanated out of the Godhead in a descending scale or progression, a grand hierarchy which is constructed on the model of the Temple of Solomon. Like the ten Kabbalistic Sephiroth and the tenfold Pythagorean Tetraktys, this great cosmic Temple is composed of ten “Spirits” or cosmic energies, arranged in a four-tiered, hierarchical pyramid ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$). These four

tiers, in turn, correspond to the four levels of Solomon's Temple: the Divine Immensity above the Temple, the Supercelestial Immensity (the Sanctuary), the Celestial Immensity (the Interior Temple) and the Terrestrial Universe (the Porch). Contrary to the "limited" and "simplistic" Catholic view of the Deity, the Masonic view suggests a dynamic and dialectical Godhead, which does not transcend the cosmos in some other world, but rather pervades the entire hierarchical body of the cosmos, manifesting itself in the structure of the great cosmic Temple. The Divinity emanates the universe out of itself in a dialectical expansion, and ultimately re-absorbs all things back into itself through the work of reintegration. In the well-known Masonic symbols, these two movements of descent and return are represented by the downward pointing triangular Compass and the upwardly pointing Square—and together, the two form the central symbol of the Solomon's Seal, or the Star of David (see fig. 3).⁴⁸

Having revealed the true Nature of the Godhead, Pasqually and Willermoz then proceed to explain the real meaning of the creation and fall of mankind. Borrowing heavily from Gnostic and Kabbalistic cosmogonies, Pasqually tells us that the world of Terrestrial Nature was originally created as a pure and translucid "spiritual matter;" the hard and corruptible world of matter that we now call earth was created only after the Fall of Lucifer and his fellow rebel-angels. When they attempted to defy God and assert themselves in His place, the angels were cast out of heaven and imprisoned within the heavy, gross real of physical matter. Adam, then, was created as the perfect image and agent of God, whose task was to guard over the world of matter and the evil spirits, to prevent them from escaping. In his primordial state, in fact, Adam was still a divine androgyne, a hermaphrodite who contained male and female within himself. Created at the center of the universe, as the quintessence of all things, he had no ordinary body of flesh and blood, but rather a divine, astral or spiritual body, a body of glory and light. "The form in which Adam was placed was purely spiritual and glorious, so that it could dominate all creation, and exercise the power which he had been given by the Creator over all beings." However, because of his own pride and lust, Adam

was tempted by the evil spirits and so fell away from God into the dark realm of matter. "In place of a glorious form he only received a shadowy form of matter. This was Eve or woman."⁴⁹ Yet despite this fall into corruption, every human being still contains within the depths of his soul the remembrance of his primordial androgyny and spiritual body, and every man still has the possibility of recovering this pristine state of unity.

Now, despite the complexity of these elaborate metaphysical systems and esoteric interpretations, I would suggest that the strategy behind both the Tantric and Masonic approaches is similar: first, it provides an "orthodox" Scriptural legitimation for an esoteric and rather unorthodox secret society; and second, by surrounding a certain body of knowledge with prohibitions, mystery and veils of symbolism, *it serves to create a body of rare and valuable information: it transforms ordinary knowledge into a precious commodity, the possession of which confers a new kind of status, power and prestige—*and new symbolic capital*—upon the one who has been initiated into these mysteries.* Finally, it also provides the foundation for the rituals and initiations which will be the central operations of the secret society. As we will now see, the Tantric and Masonic initiations are intended precisely to un-do or reverse the cosmogonic unfolding, to return man to his God-like state of unity.

III. The New Man: the Deconstruction of the Individual Body and the Birth of the New Esoteric Identity, Inscribed within the Hierarchical Body of the Society

The esoteric initiate claims to hold the secret key, not only to the true sacred tradition and the true meaning of the Scriptures, but also to a new esoteric Identity, a supreme Self which lies hidden behind the outward illusion of his social ego. The third strategy I wish to examine is one that must be enacted ritually, through secret initiation. As he ascends the grades of knowledge, the adept's own exoteric self is destroyed and put to death; symbolically, his ordinary physical body is dissolved, while at the same time, the ordinary boundaries of the "social body" are also transgressed. In its place, the initiate then

receives a new esoteric 'I' and a new "spiritual body," which is now *inscribed* by the hierarchy of initiations and grades, and at the same time *inscribed within* the hierarchical structure of the secret society.⁵⁰

For the Tantric practitioner, the prerequisite for all higher forms of ritual is the initiation (*dīkṣā*) at the hands of an experienced guru. Through initiation, the adept passes from his mundane worldly, exoteric identity into a new, esoteric identity, shifting from the world of established social structures, into a new role within the secret society (the *kula*, "family" and *paramparā*, "lineage"). This can only occur, however, through the most radical experience of death and dissolution (*laya*) of his old, outward identity, which is the core of initiation.⁵¹ This is achieved through ritual meditation, by visualizing the power (*Śakti*) of the great Goddess as a raging fire, which blazes up within the initiate and consumes his entire body. As the fire of the Goddess rises upward through the adept, it progressively devours and dissolves each of the 36 elements (*tattvas*) which comprise all existing things. Initiation, as Sanderson points out, represents the destruction of the exoteric, social identity of the initiate, which will prepare him to be reborn with a new esoteric, supremely powerful identity within the hierarchy of the Tantric lineage.⁵²

Now, if the Tantric initiation dissolves the ordinary body and identity of the adept, the more advanced Tantric practices aim to dissolve—albeit temporarily and within the confines of ritual—all ordinary social boundaries. As Louis Dumont has shown, the orthodox Hindu religious and social order, is based largely on a complex classification and hierarchical structuring of the world and society: all things may be categorized according to a hierarchy of relative purity and impurity, with Brahmins at the top and Untouchables at the bottom.⁵³ The aim of Tantric ritual, however, is nothing other than to manipulate precisely those substances which are considered most impure and polluting in the eyes of orthodox Hindu society. As Sanderson comments, even the high class Brahmin Tantrics like Abhinavagupta and Bhāskararāya engaged in an "occult manipulation of impurity" in order to release the dangerous, wild and chaotic power of what is forbidden and unclean. The secret initiation unleashes

the awesome power of ritual impurity, sexuality and violence; it infuses the initiate with a supreme esoteric power, and reveals to him a supreme, divinized Selfhood, transcending all the laws of the outward social order.⁵⁴

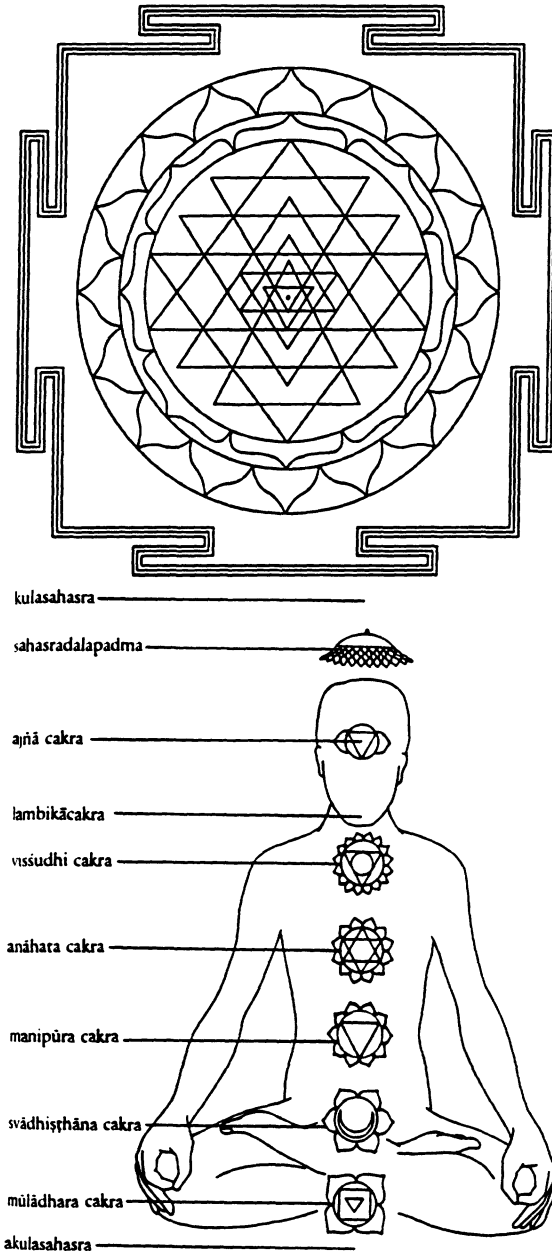
Yet ultimately, the aim behind the transgression of orthodox laws of purity is by no means a matter of antinomianism. Rather, this represents an explicit and calculated manipulation of the boundaries of the social order, of purity and impurity, in order to attain a radical form of power which transcends the dualities of the mundane world. In the course of Tantric ritual, the initiate will manipulate substances which are normally considered polluting in the orthodox Hindu tradition—namely, the well-known five Ms of Tantric practice: meat, fish, wine, parched grain and sexual intercourse. However, as André Padoux points out, if it is true that the Tantric manipulates impure substances as a source of ritual power, these substances only have such power because they are normally regulated by strict laws of purity. The Tantric does not simply abolish the duality of purity and impurity, but on the contrary *exploits* this duality by first *intensifying* and then *transgressing* it. Thus it becomes a “new mechanism for assuring the privilege of Tantrics over non-Tantrics,” of proving that he transcends the ordinary *pasus*, who are still bound by the conventional world of dualities and exoteric laws: “The dichotomies of impure/pure are . . . mechanisms for episodic forms of power. The Tantric’s deliberate reversal of brahmanic values through . . . meat, liquor and sex presents an opportunity to exploit the distinction between pure and impure.”⁵⁵

Indeed, far from obliterating all social structures in antinomian ecstasy, the Śrīvidyā Tantric creates a new esoteric social structure (the *kula* or family and *paramparā* or lineage of the Tantric sect) with an even more elaborate hierarchical order. This hierarchy is based on the graded structure of the universe, and is embodied in the famous Tantric diagram, the Śrī Cakra (see fig. 1). As Bhāskaraṛāya explains in his commentary on the *Tripurā Upaniṣad*, the Śrī Cakra is composed of a series of nine interpenetrating triangles, surrounded by an outer circle, which represent the nine stages of the unfolding of the cosmos. At the center of the diagram is the bindu or seed point, which

is the symbol of the Absolute unity of the Goddess Śakti or Tripurā and her consort Śiva. United in this central point, Śiva and Śakti symbolize the original nonduality of masculine and feminine, the eternal source and the power of creation, the illumination (*prakāśa*) of pure consciousness and its reflection (*vimarśa*) as self-awareness. And the nine interpenetrating triangles which emanate from this central point represent the progressive stages of creation as it radiates from this supreme unity into the multiplicity of the universe. In the process of Tantric meditation and the practice of Kuṇḍalinī yoga, the initiate will then discover this same ninefold hierarchy within his own body, in the nine energy centers or *cakras* which run along the spine from the genitals to the top of the head (the *mūlādhāra* [groin], the *svādhiṣṭhāna* [genitals], the *maṇipūra* [navel], the *anāhata* [stomach], the *viśuddhi* [neck], the *lambikā* [mouth], the *ajñā* [eye brows], the *sahasrāra* [the crown] and the *kulasahara* [above the head]) (see fig. 2).⁵⁶

However, more than just a cosmogram and psychogram, the Śrī Cakra is also a kind of *cult-o-gram* or sociogram—an emblem of the divine power of the Guru and the hierarchy of the Tantric sect. As Bhāskararāya states in his commentary on the *Bhavana Upanisad*, the nine levels of the Śrī Cakra also correspond to the nine apertures of the body of the Guru and to the nine forms through which he manifests his teaching to his disciples: “The master is the primordial power. The ninefold character of his body is revealed by the nine apertures of his body.”⁵⁷ Still further, the nine levels are then identified with the nine primary gurus of the Tantric lineage. The Gurus exist at three spiritual levels—the divine, human and intermediary forms—and at each level there are three different Gurus—the immediate master, his master and his master’s master. When the adept is initiated into this system, and when he passes through this hierarchy in ritual or meditation, he is simultaneously *inscribing* the hierarchy of the Tantric lineage upon his own body and consciousness. And in turn, he himself is inscribed within the hierarchical body of the lineage.

By ascending the hierarchy of initiations, and by ascending the series of cakras within his body, the Tantrika hopes to realize his own true Self—his own pure awareness which is identical with the



Figures 1 and 2. The Śrī Cakra diagram and the cakras of the human body (from Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities*).

supreme consciousness of the Goddess Śakti. In the Śrī Cakra diagram, this is represented by the meditative journey from the periphery to the center of the diagram, which moves through the nine-fold hierarchy of triangles to the ultimate divine point at center: “The path leads to the unity of undifferentiated divine being . . . the One without a second . . . the totality of pure Being.”⁵⁸

At the highest stages of Tantric practice, the adept discovers that this divine process of the creation and re-absorption of the universe is in fact going on within his own body and his own consciousness—he discovers, in other words, the fact of his own identity with the Goddess, his own Godhood. “Śrī Cakra is in the form of nine Cakras . . . it is the body. One’s own body is not different from the Śrī Cakra which has as its form the collection of cakras.”⁵⁹ Hence, the great reintegration of the male and female halves of the universe can be accomplished in no better way than through actual sexual yoga or *maithuna*, which obliterates the illusory duality of the material world by an actual union of opposites—male and female, high and low caste, pure and impure—in secret ritual. The most important means for this radical return to unity is the yogic technique known as Laya yoga (the process of “dissolution”) or Kuṇḍalinī yoga, the arousal of the inner spiritual energy of the body through sexual intercourse. By engaging in ritual intercourse, the adept hopes to arouse and “ignite” the divine energy (the goddess Kuṇḍalinī, representing the microcosmic form of the Goddess) which lies coiled within his own body, slumbering like a serpent at the base of the spine. Once awakened by means of physical intercourse, this inner serpent-fire is then caused to ascend through the body in a kind of “internalized sexual intercourse.” The female energy of Kuṇḍalinī rises through the hierarchy of cakras within the body, until it comes to ecstatic union with the divine male principle, the God Śiva, at the top of the head. As the divine energy of Śakti ascends through the body, passing through the hierarchical levels of the microcosm, it simultaneously brings about the reversal and reabsorption of the entire cosmos, re-integrating the hierarchical levels of the macrocosm itself. It represents nothing less than the

reversion of both the world and the body back into divine unity and Pure, Undifferentiated Consciousness (*Samvit*).⁶⁰

At this stage, the *sādhaka* realizes his own deepest identity with the Goddess herself, and thus with all of her creative and destructive powers: “the goal of the practice is not only to identify one’s innermost soul with the divine Goddess, it is to participate in all her powers . . . including the creation and dissolution of the universe.”⁶¹

In the center of the *cakras* made up of human limbs and sensory organs stands the Goddess; her shape is Self-Knowledge (*saṃvid*) for the sake of universal perfection let him worship her with all the flowers of his consciousness of Self. The Goddess Tripurā is his own knowledge of himself; her crimson colored body signifies his Comprehension.⁶²

Such a man has now realized within himself a supremely powerful and liberated Self, which radically transcends the laws of the exoteric social order. He who has “attained Brahman’s form,” Bhāskaraṛāya states, may leave behind rules and “do as he likes.”⁶³

This does not, however, mean a subversion or revolt against the social order; on the contrary, it gives the initiate a dual or Janus-faced identity, a heterodox “occult Self,” which is encoded within and behind the illusion of the outer social self. Outwardly, the initiate follows the traditional laws and restrictions of orthodox religion and social structure; but inwardly he possesses a “superhuman power,” the ability “to do things that others cannot or come into contact with things that are routinely dangerous or polluting.”⁶⁴ In the words of a contemporary Śrīvidyā adept,

we should remain like Vaiṣṇavas for worldly purposes, like Śaivas in outward appearance and like Śāktas inwardly. . . We should keep our Śākta *sādhana* to ourselves. . . Everyone knows that Śāktas have great power.⁶⁵

In short, the Tantric seeks to maintain an ingenious kind of ‘double-norm,’ a dual-edged strategy for living in both Tantric and Vedic worlds. On the exoteric level a moral paragon, and on the esoteric level an antinomian, the Tantrika does not seek to subvert or undermine the orthodox social order, but in fact subtly *re-negotiates* it to suit his own interests. As Brooks concludes, the Śrīvidyā tradition

thereby helped to reinforce Brahminical power and authority when it was being threatened by other movements such as bhakti or Vedānta. By no means “an egalitarian agenda open to all,” Śrīvidyā “assumes the conservative agenda of Brahmanism:” “Those possessed traditionally of such privileges, namely Brahmins, become deeply interested in Tantrism as an alternative to other ideologies that demand a diminution of specialized knowledge.”⁶⁶

That the Masonic initiations and secret practices are quite profoundly different from those of the Indian Tantrics should go without saying. However, that the *underlying logic* of the Masonic rites might be remarkably similar to that of the Śrīvidyā adepts is less obvious and worth exploring in more detail. The precise order and names of the degrees in the diverse Masonic traditions vary tremendously. Virtually all lodges accept three basic lower grades (the “blue” grades): Apprentice, Companion, and Master. However, the more esoteric orders such as the Élus-Coens and the Scottish Rites added a series of additional, progressively more secret degrees beyond these first three (a total of 33 in the *Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté*).

According to Pasqually’s Élus Coens, there are 10 degrees, corresponding to the Pythagorean tetraktys of the decad, and to the tenfold hierarchy of the universe. In the Rectified Scottish Rite, Willermoz tried to harmonize the Masonic initiations with Pasqually’s system: the result was a system of three Blue grades, two Grades of the “Interior”—*Mître Écossais réputé rectifié*, and *Chevalier Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte*—and finally, the two most esoteric, grades called *la Profession* and *Grand Profession*, in which the initiate was instructed in the most secret mysteries of creation (based on Pasqually’s cosmogonic system).⁶⁷

However, virtually all Masonic initiations involve an initial process of ritual death and rebirth. Among the most common ways of depicting this death and rebirth is the legend of Hiram—one of the favorite themes in Masonic lore. (According to the tradition, Hiram had been the mason who helped Solomon build the Temple, and who therefore held the secret knowledge of its construction. Because of his knowledge, however, he was murdered, and his body was then torn apart

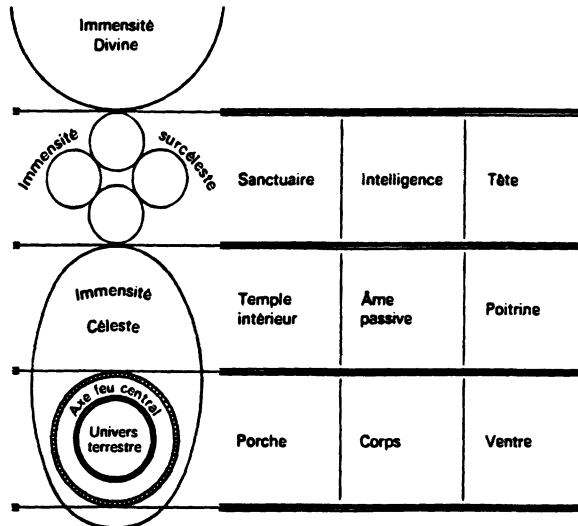
and searched by thieves, who hoped to find the key to Solomon's craft. In many schools of Masonry, this legend is then symbolically re-enacted, as the initiate is locked in a coffin-shaped chamber representing Hiram's grave.)⁶⁸ In any case, however, initiation into the Lodge signifies that he has "died" to the ordinary hierarchy of society and been reborn into a new esoteric hierarchy: "When one entered the Temple, one relinquished one's identity, becoming subsumed by the Order."⁶⁹ And as he then rises through the levels of initiation, he will not only progress through hierarchical order of lodge, but also through the hierarchical structure of the human being and the cosmos, reversing the downward movement of creation, and returning to the One.

The deeper strategy behind these elaborate esoteric initiations is much the same as we have seen in the Tantric tradition: namely, *to inscribe the initiate into the hierarchical order of the esoteric group, while at the same time inscribing this same hierarchy upon his own body and consciousness*. The hierarchy of the universe is homologized with the hierarchy of wardens and masters in the lodge, and these are in turn homologized with the *body*, consciousness and the psycho-physical hierarchy of the initiate himself. According to the ritual of the Rectified Rite, the three primary levels of the Temple of Solomon are correlated with the body, soul, and spirit of the initiate; and these three parts of the human being are then identified respectively with the first three Grades. During the initiation ceremony, the Master strikes the body of the initiate three times with a sword—one blow to the stomach, one to the heart, and one to the head—symbolizing his entry into and ascent of the hierarchical body of the Lodge.⁷⁰ In short, through an elaborate network of secret correspondences, symbolic codes and esoteric interpretations, all levels of reality are brought together and interwoven: the Temple is the divine paradigm of the cosmos, the body and Masonic brotherhood alike. As we saw above, the esoteric re-interpretation of the cosmogony views the entire universe as a grand temple, which has been created in a descending hierarchy by the Grand Architect, God Himself. It is constructed from the top down, as it were, from the Divine Immen-

sity, to the Supercelestial Immensity (identified with the Sanctuary of the Temple), to the Celestial Immensity or Astral Plane (the Interior Temple) down to the Terrestrial world (the Porch of the Temple). These three levels of the cosmos/Temple are then homologized with the three primary parts of the human microcosm—the Intelligence, the Soul, and the Body—and finally with the three main parts of the human body itself—the Head, the Breast, and the Breath. “The three blows signify the inconceivable union within you, of the spirit, the soul and the body, which is the great mystery of Man and of the Mason.”⁷¹ These homologies may be schematically arranged as follows (see fig. 4):

Divine Immensity			
Supercelestial Immensity	Sanctuary	Intelligence	Head
Celestial Immensity	Interior Temple	Passive Soul	Breast/Heart
Terrestrial Universe	Porch	Body	Breath

The progressive ritual grades of the Masonic initiations are intended to “re-build” this cosmic Temple of Solomon, which has been dis-integrated and dis-jointed by the Fall. As the adept ascends through the degrees, he is gradually restored to the original role of the first Man, Adam, whose purpose was to unite and govern the cosmic Temple. This is achieved precisely through the human body and Intellect themselves, which are homologues of the cosmos and of the Divine Nature. For “the construction of this Temple truly represents the emanation of the First Man,” and this same primordial Man is the essential archetype and true nature of every man. “The intelligence of man resides in his head, as in the sanctuary of his individual Temple,” Pasqually proclaims; “man must be purified to enter into his true sanctuary, in which he renders homage to the divinity. Head, heart, breath, sanctuary, interior temple, porch; supercelestial, celestial, terrestrial; everything ‘corresponds.’ ”⁷² Initiation marks the passage of the novice from the outer porch to the inner sanctuary. Its goal is nothing less than to bring about the re-union of the higher world with



Figures 3 and 4. The Square and Compass, which form the Seal of Solomon, and the hierarchal Temple of Cosmos, homologized with the parts of the human being (from Hutin, *Les Franc-Maçons* and Faivre, *Accès de l'esoterisme occidental*).

the lower world, the earth with the Supercelestial Immensity, matter with Spirit.

This re-integration of above and below is symbolized in a variety of ways in the Masonic tradition: for Pasqually, and for Willermoz in his earlier writings, this is conceived as a work of Divine or spiritual “alchemy” (though Willermoz would eventually reject the alchemical motif in his later works). Through the process of Masonic initiation, the individual is progressively “dissolved” and “transmuted” into a new spiritual being; symbolically, his own physical body (his gross, leaden state) is alchemically broken down into its *prima materia*, only to be purified and reintegrated as a new spiritual corpus. The Masonic quest is the search for the fabled “Philosopher’s Stone,” the key to hidden wisdom, which represents this mysterious transformation of a rough imperfect stone into a priceless treasure.⁷³

More commonly this divine union is symbolized by the traditional Masonic images such as the pillars Joachim and Boas and the Seal of Solomon. The two pillars which stand outside the Temple, called by the Biblical names of Joachim and Boas, symbolize the two divine principles of sun and moon, male and female. Secondly, this is symbolized by the union of the Compass and the Square, whose two interlocking triangles form the Seal of Solomon and represent the perfect union of heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, rejoining of the world of creation with its Eternal Creator. By uniting these opposites, by wedding the Sun and the Moon, above and below, male and female, the true Mason “transports heaven to earth.”⁷⁴

Ultimately, by rebuilding the Great Cosmic Temple of Jerusalem, by reintegrating the cosmic hierarchy, the initiate can ascend to the highest stage of gnosis and union with the Deity—the stage in which he recovers the primordial condition of Adam, representing the perfection and culmination of God’s creation. In this exalted state, he regains the original freedom, divinity and androgynic perfection originally enjoyed by Adam in Paradise; and because Adam is himself the image of the entire created universe, to reintegrate and restore the primordial condition of Man is also to reintegrate and restore the entire cosmos to its original, pre-fallen state of perfection.

The Rectified Scottish Rite reactualizes the Temple. . . The Mason reconstructs the primordial Temple, after the Fall, to allow God to enter again, and to allow human beings themselves to return as prodigal sons, leading all of nature in this assumption.⁷⁵

Yet ultimately, the final goal of the Masonic initiations is to return to the world, to reenter the realm of social action, and to infuse it with the esoteric power achieved through initiation. The Mason does not intend to revolutionize society directly, but rather to transform it *from within*—that is, to create a new society within the space of the lodge, and then to send members back into the external world, to spread the effects of this New Order in the rest of society: “Building the Temple,” writes Stevenson, “was a synonym for building the New Jerusalem, the true godly community . . . the secret ritual of the lodge was parallel to the public role of the church on earth.”⁷⁶ In fact, throughout the French aristocracy, merchant community and military, the Masonic Lodges served as a powerful infra-structure or “old-boys” network of promotions and advancements, which allowed the Mason to ascend both the spiritual and the socio-economic hierarchy. “Membership carried tangible benefits,” As Mark Carnes observes, “Businessmen made contacts, cultivated credit sources, and gained access to a nationwide network of lodges.”⁷⁷ Willermoz himself, as we have seen, found in the elaborate, esoteric initiations of Masonry a means of greatly improving his own symbolic capital and social status. Though born a petit bourgeois silk maker, he became an extremely wealthy merchant and a highly respected member of Lyonnais society, one of the leading officials in the city, and patronized by Charles of Hesse, Ferdinand of Brunswick and other European nobles.

Conclusions and Comparative Comments

In sum, both the Śrīvidyā Tantrics and the French Freemasons represent largely upper class, highly affluent élites, who were faced with a changing social system and who sought to reinforce their own traditional power and privileges. To do so, both groups employed a

common set of strategies: First, a promise of liberation and equality within the secret domain of ritual, accompanied by a recoding and re-affirmation of hierarchical power; second, a hermeneutical strategy which serves to create a secret, “rare” and highly valuable body of esoteric knowledge; and third, the creation of an initiatic hierarchy, which is inscribed upon the individual body, and which the initiate ascends as he rises in status and prestige. In both cases, these double edged strategies allowed the individual to preserve and in fact reinforce his place within the outward social order, while at the same time cultivating a secret esoteric identity, which is utterly freed from laws of the conventional world.

Of course, we must also acknowledge the many fundamental differences between these two traditions. First of all, the Tantric path is based on a very explicit manipulation of the traditional Hindu categories of purity and impurity, by use of sexual practices and forbidden substances. Although there were many accusations of such transgressive activities among the lodges this has little parallel in the Masonic tradition. A more important difference, however, is the sociopolitical impact of these two traditions. Vaidika Tantriks like Bhāskaraṛāya were deeply committed to preserving the traditional social structures and maintaining power amidst a changing social order. They were only interested in transgressing the social order insofar as it suited their own private interests. The French Masons were also very much concerned with preserving their own power and privileges; however, as Jacob has shown, the lodges were inherently *Janus-faced*. Even through they preserved the hierarchies of the old order and the Ancien Régime, they also opened up a new civic space, which made possible the discussion of new ideals like those of democracy and social reform. The lodges were therefore not directly responsible for the great political changes of the 18th century, such as the French and American Revolutions, but they were part of the changing public sphere which made the conception of such changes possible.⁷⁸

In this paper I have suggested a new approach to the phenomenon of esotericism, by placing it in a cross-cultural perspective and by looking specifically at its socio-political implications. By no means

solely a counter-cultural, subversive phenomenon, esotericism is very often a highly conservative, elitist phenomenon, which functions, not to overthrow existing hierarchies, but rather to *reinforce, recode, or reshape* them to suit the interests of a select minority.

Obviously, this paper only scratches the surface of a vast and relatively unexplored mine of esoteric traditions which it is my hope historians of religions will soon begin to explore. Is it possible to extend these conclusions to other esoteric traditions, such as Kabbalah, Gnosticism, Sufism, pre-modern secret societies, or the recent proliferation of new religious movements? Personally, I believe that it is, but I will leave this question for other more knowledgeable scholars to debate.

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¹ The term "esotericism" was first coined by Jacques Matter in 1828, *Histoire critique du gnosticisme et de son influence* (Paris: Levraut, 1828). See Antoine Faivre, "Introduction I" to *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); "Esotericism," *The MacMillan Encyclopedia of Religion*. M. Eliade, ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1986), v. 5; and *Accès de l'ésotérisme occidental* (Paris, 1986). See also Edward Tiryakian, "Toward the Sociology of Esoteric Culture," *American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (1952), pp. 498-499.

² For example, at the 1994 meeting of the American Academy of Religions, there was a very fine panel held on the topic of "Secrecy in South Asian Religions;" however among all the papers presented, there was virtually no mention either of the social and political implications of secrecy, or of the cross-cultural and comparative implications of the topic.

³ Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 47ff; Kees Bolle, ed., *Secrecy in Religions*, (New York: E.J. Brill, 1987). Secrecy, Bolle concludes, "lies near the heart of every religion, its most profound mysterium magnum," and is identified with "the Way of Tao, God's Love in the Bhagavadgita, the secret rebirth of Christian mystics" (p. xiii). For the perennialist view see René Guénon, *Aperçus sur l'initiation* (Paris, 1946); Frithjof Schuon, *Esoterism as Principle and as Way* (Bloomington, 1986).

⁴ See, for example, Antoine Faivre and Karen-Claire Voss, "Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions," *Numen* v. 42 (1995), pp. 48-77.

⁵ See *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, K. Wolff, trans. (New York: Free Press, 1950), p. 345; Stanton Tefft, "Secrecy, Disclosure and Social Theory," *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980), p. 35.

⁶ See Tiryakian, "Toward the Sociology of Esoteric Culture;" Theodore Roszak (*The Making of a Counter-Culture* [New York, 1969]); as Tiryakian comments, "As a spiritual reaction against the rationalistic-industrial-bureaucratic ethos of modern society, it is part of the counter-culture" (p. 496). See also E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959).

⁷ This point has also been made by Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 21. As Simmel comments "The secret gives one a position of exception: it operates as a socially determined attraction ... all superior persons ... have something mysterious" (*The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, pp. 332-333).

On the general concept of "elitism," see G. Marcus, ed., *Elites, Ethnographic Issues* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983). Following Marcus, I shall be using the term "elites" in the most general sense, to designate "the rich, powerful and privileged in any society" who represent "a tiny minority with inordinately large amounts of influence in relation to the population" (p. 3).

There are, of course, many "non-elitist" secret societies: in many pre-modern tribal cultures, secret societies are open to all adult members of the community (cf. Barth, *Ritual and Knowledge*). And there are many secret societies which appeal specifically to lower classes, the oppressed, the marginalized or the dissident members of society (cf. I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* [London, 1989]); On revolutionary secret societies like the Mau Mau in Kenya or the White Lotus in China, see Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham, *The Myth of the 'Mau Mau': Nationalism in Kenya* (Stanford, 1966); Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China* (New Haven, 1976).

⁸ Beryl Bellman, *The Language of Secrecy: Symbols and Metaphors in Poro Ritual* [New Brunswick, 1984], p. 3. The classic sociological work is that of Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and Secret Societies," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, K. Wolff, ed., (New York: 1950). See also Tefft, *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, (New York: 1980); Mak Lou Fong, *The Sociology of Secret Societies: A Chinese Secret Society in Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia* (New York, 1981); Franz Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *35th Annual Report of the American Bureau of Ethnography* (Washington, 1921); Fredrik Barth, *Ritual and Knowledge among the Baktaman of New Guinea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 47-104. Norman MacKenzie, *Secret Societies* (New York, 1967).

⁹ Cf. Bellman, *The Language of Secrecy*, p. 3ff. Here I am using the terms “strategies” and “tactics” in the sense that Pierre Bourdieu and Michel de Certeau have used them (see *The Logic of Practice* [Cambridge, 1990] and *The Practice of Everyday Life* [Berkeley, 1984]).

¹⁰ *Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society* (Washington, 1990), pp. 119ff. See Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹¹ “Comparison does not tell us how things ‘are’ ... like models and metaphors, comparison tells us how things might be ... ‘redescribed,’ in Max Black’s term ... comparison provides the means by which we ‘re-vision’ phenomena to solve our theoretical problems” (Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], p. 52). Cf. Max Black, “Metaphor,” *On Metaphor*, S. Sacks, ed. (Chicago, 1986); Fitz John Porter Poole, “Metaphors and Maps: Towards Comparison in the Anthropology of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, v. LIV, no. 3 (1986); Lee Yerley, *Mencius and Aquinas Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Albany, SUNY, 1990), p. 188.

¹² Cf. Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies in Myth, Ritual and Classification* (New York: Oxford, 1989), p. 85; *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Rituals of Women’s Initiations* (New York, 1991).

¹³ For a general definition of “Tantra,” see Paul Muller-Ortega, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva: The Kaula Tantra of Abhinavagupta and the Non-Dual Śaivism of Kashmir* (Albany: SUNY, 1989), who identifies 7 characteristics: 1) a text which presents itself as revealed, but without dependence on the Vedas; 2) reaction against Upaniṣadic asceticism; 3) correlations between man, God and the cosmos; 4) the role of sakti, the cosmic creative force; 5) initiation and esoteric ritual; 6) the power of mantra; 7) the symbolism of body (p. 49-51). On the Śrīvidyā school, see Douglas Brooks, *Auspicious Wisdom: The Texts and Traditions of Śrīvidyā Śākta Tantrism in South India* (Albany: SUNY, 1992) p. 188; cf. Narendranath Bhattacharyya, *History of the Śākta Religion* (New Delhi, 1975).

¹⁴ Brooks, *Auspicious Wisdom*, p. 188.

¹⁵ For biographical information on Bhāskara, see his introduction to the *Varivasyārahasya* by Bhāskararāya with the Autocommentary entitled *Prakāśa*. S. Subrahmanya Sastri (Madras: Adyar Library, 1968), p. xxi. His primary Tantric works are: *Lalitāsahasranāma*, (*stotra*) with the *Saubhāgyabhāskarabhāṣya* of Bhāskararāya, ed. Śrī Pithāmbarapitha (Nagpur, 1982); *Nityāṣoḍaśikāṛṇava* (*tantra*), ed. V.V. Dwiveda (Varanāsi, 1968), ed. in Poona, 1908, with the commentary, *Setubandha* of Bhāskararāya; *The Kaula and Other Upaniṣads with Commentary by Bhāskararāya*, ed. Sitarama Shastri (Calcutta: Luzac, 1922); *Bhāvanopaniṣad*, in *Kaula and other Upaniṣads*; and *Tripurā Upaniṣad in Kaula and Other Upaniṣads*, translated by Douglas Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities: An Introduction to Hindu Śākta Tantrism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 149-190.

¹⁶ *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, v. 15.

¹⁷ *The Secret of the Three Cities*, p. 25-6.

¹⁸ *Vāc: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras* (Albany: SUNY, 1990), pp. 35-6n.

¹⁹ Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 209. "[Masonic history] is the happiest of all hunting grounds for . . . the fanciful, the unscholarly and the lunatic fringe of the British Museum Reading Room" (D. Knoop and G.P. Jones, *The Genesis of Freemasonry* [Manchester, 1947], p. 5). Yates believes that the first speculative Masons were Elias Ashmole—a known Hermeticist, who had copied out Rosicrucian Manifestos by hand and who was admitted into Masonic lodge in 1646, and Robert Moray, who was admitted into lodge in Edinburgh in 1641. Both Moray and Ashmole later became members of the Royal Society. David Stevenson locates its origins much earlier, around 1600 in Scotland, with the admission of Robert Schaw into an operative lodge (*The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710* [Cambridge, 1988], pp. 232-233). Yates suggests a link between the Rosicrucians and Freemasons, through which the mysteries of mathematics, architecture and the arts of memory were transmitted. The Rosicrucian influence seems to have entered Masonry through Elias Ashmole, while the Templar legend was adopted through André Michel Ramsey (1686-1743), who brought this lore within him from Scotland.

²⁰ *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); cf. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 50-52; William Weisberger, *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment: A Study of the Craft in London, Paris, Prague and Vienna* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). "The Enlightenment provided the rudiments of a new Western identity. . . Only the literate and educated could be trusted to act ethically and think disinterestedly in the interests of society" (Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, pp. 21-22).

²¹ The so-called "Scottish" Rites emerged in France in the mid 18th century as a reformist movement, which attempted to restore the original spirit of Masonry, including a more elaborate hierarchy and ritual, and more magical elements. Some believe this movement was begun by Chevalier Ramsay, who introduced the Templar mythology and other occult elements to France in 1736. See Paul Naudon, *Histoire et Rituels des Hauts Grades Maçonniques: Le Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté* (Paris, 1966); Albert Lantoiné, *Le Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté* (Paris, 1930).

²² Pasqually, "a man of rather mysterious origin," was probably born a Spanish Jew, and converted to Catholicism. He apparently knew something of the Kabbalah, and legend has it that he had journeyed to China to learn secret traditions (Edmund Mazet, "Freemasonry and Esoterism," *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, A. Faivre, ed. [New York: Crossroad, 1993], p. 256; cf. Gérard van Rijnberk, *Martinès de*

Pasqually: Un thaumaturge au XVIIIe siècle (Hildesheim, 1982), pp. 11-17). The primary work of Pasqually are the *Traité de la Réintégration des êtres dans leurs premières propriétés, vertus et puissances, spirituelles et divines* (1771), R. Amadou, ed. (Paris, 1974); *Conférences des Élus Cohens de Lyons* (1774), A. Faivre, ed. (Editions du Baucens, 1974).

²³ Mazet, "Freemasonry and Esotericism," p. 264. The primary works of Willermoz are *Instructions Secrètes aux Grands Profès*; Appendix to René le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1970); and letters concerning the organization of the Lodge, published in Steel-Maret, *Archives Secrètes de la Franc-Maçonnerie* (Lyons, 1893). The primary writings of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin are *Des Erreurs et de la Vérité*; *Tableau Naturel*; *L'Homme de Désir* and *Lettre sur la Révolution* in *Oeuvres Majeurs*. R. Amadou, ed. (Hildesheim, 1975).

²⁴ Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, p. 288.

²⁵ Alice Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais et les Secrètes de la Franc-Maçonnerie, 1730-1824* (Macon, 1938), p. 102.

²⁶ Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais*, p. 3.

²⁷ Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais*, p. 2. On the background of Saint-Martin and Willermoz, and their appeal to the wealthy classes, see Serge Hutin, *Les Franc-Maçons* (Paris, 1960), p. 89.

²⁸ Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, p. 276.

²⁹ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, p. 207-208. The role of the Masons in the French (and American) revolution is a matter of great debate. Some, like Serbonesco and many anti-Masonic Catholic historians attribute an important role to the Masons (cf. *Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie universelle*, v. II, pp. 495ff). More reliable scholars suggest that the Masons were usually very conservative and anti-revolutionary.

³⁰ Quoted in D. Serbonesco, *Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie universelle* (Paris, 1963), v. II, pp. 158-159; cf. Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, p. 440.

³¹ On the role of women in French lodges in the mid 1700s see Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, pp. 21, 121ff. The first lodge to do so appears to have been La Loge de Juste in 1751.

³² Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais*, pp. 305, 306.

³³ *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, pp. 49-50. "This baroque freemasonry, so popular ... among the aristocracy and high bourgeoisie ... could reinforce a sense of hierarchy" (Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, p. 208). "The mysticism of the masonic degrees combined the mystique of ultimate social ascendancy, the dedication to order, hierarchy and perfectibility with the masonic ideology of merit" (ibid.).

³⁴ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, p. 207.

³⁵ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, p. 45.

³⁶ Daniel O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic* (New York, 1982). See also Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, pp. 3-11. For similar strategies of legitimization of esoteric texts see Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 200f.

³⁷ Lindstrom, *Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society*, pp. 119ff. See Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, 1991).

³⁸ *Commentary on the Bhāvanopaniṣad*, p. 13.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 23; cf. *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, v. 15.

⁴⁰ Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities*, p. 19. See *Commentary on the Bhāvanopaniṣad*, p. 33.

⁴¹ Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities*, p. 17. (Cf. Goudriaan, *Hindu Tantrism*, p. 32). On the potential danger of Tantric teachings, see *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, v. 13.

⁴² *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, vv. 1-3.

⁴³ Bhattacharya, *History of the Śākta Religion*, p. 154; cf. Bhāskara's *Commentary on the Nityāśoḍaśikārnava*, I, 32ff; Zimmer, *Artistic Form and Yoga*, pp. 160-165.

⁴⁴ Faivre, *Accès*, pp. 177ff; Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, p. 439f.

⁴⁵ E.M. Caro, *Du Mysticisme au XVIIIe Siècle: essai sur la vie et la doctrine de Saint Martin* (Geneve, 1975), pp. 185, 108.

⁴⁶ Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, pp. 81-82.

⁴⁷ van Rijnberk, *Martinès de Pasqually*, v. I, pp. 42-46. For a thorough discussion of Martinez's cosmology, see Edmond Mazet, "La Conception de la Matière chez Martinez de Pasqually et dans le Régime Écossais Rectifié," *Epochen der Naturmystik*, A. Faivre, ed. (Berlin, 1979), pp. 278-313.

⁴⁸ See Faivre, *Accès*, pp. 174ff; Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, p. 453; Nicole Jaques-Chaquin, "La Philosophie de la Nature chez Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin," *Epochen der Naturmystik*, A. Faivre, ed. (Berlin, 1979), p. 316.

⁴⁹ *Traité de la Réintégration*, p. 180; in Mazet, "La Conception de la Matière chez Martinez de Pasqually," p. 30, Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 453ff.

⁵⁰ Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, "Rites of Institution," *Language and Symbolic Power*, pp. 117-127, and *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, 1977): "All the symbolic manipulations of bodily experience, starting with ... a symbolically structured space, tend to impose the integration of body space with cosmic space and social space, by applying the same categories ... to the relationship between man and the natural world" (p. 77). On the "inscription" of the social law upon the human body, see de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 139ff; Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Revolution: The History and Culture of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 9ff.

- ⁵¹ Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities*, p. 110; see *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, v. 2.
- ⁵² "Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kāśmir," *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituels dans l'Hindouisme*, A. Padoux, ed. (Paris, 1984), pp. 170-172.
- ⁵³ Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications* (Chicago, 1980). Cf. K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual and Religion* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 48ff.
- ⁵⁴ "Purity and Power among the Brahmins of Kashmir," p. 191.
- ⁵⁵ Brooks, *Auspicious Wisdom*, p. 149-150.
- ⁵⁶ Bhāvanopaniṣad; in Rao, *The Tantra of Śrī-Chakra*, pp. 55ff.
- ⁵⁷ *Commentary on the Tantra-rāja Tantra*, in *The Tantra of Śrī-Chakra*, p. 38.
- ⁵⁸ Zimmer, *Artistic Form and Yoga*, p. 166. Cf. *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, v. 15.
- ⁵⁹ *Commentary on the Bhāvanopaniṣad*, p. 8.
- ⁶⁰ *Gherandasamhitā*, in Bhattacharyya, *History of the Tantric Religion*, pp. 336-337; cf. Lilian Silburn, *Kuṇḍalinī: Energy of the Depths* (Albany: SUNY, 1991).
- ⁶¹ Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities*, p. 109.
- ⁶² *Commentary on the Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava*; in Zimmer, *Artistic Form and Yoga*, p. 179.
- ⁶³ *Tripurā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, v. 15.
- ⁶⁴ Brooks, *Auspicious Wisdom*, p. 158-159.
- ⁶⁵ Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities*, p. 90.
- ⁶⁶ *Auspicious Wisdom*, p. 182.
- ⁶⁷ Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, p. 436; cf. Pasqually's *Conférences des Élus-Coens de Lyons*; see also Faivre, *Accès*, pp. 176ff.
- ⁶⁸ Cf. Wiesberger, *Speculative Freemasonry*, pp. 34f; Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais*, p. 3f.
- ⁶⁹ Michael Baignet and Richard Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge* (New York, 1989), p. 7. See Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, pp. 144-145, 160-161.
- ⁷⁰ Faivre, *Accès*, p. 187ff.
- ⁷¹ Willermoz, *L'instruction morale du grade d'apprenti*; in Mazet, "La Conception de la Matière," p. 310; cf. Faivre, *Accès*, p. 174ff.
- ⁷² *Traité de la Réintégration*, p. 25; Faivre, *Accès*, p. 187. (Cf. Willermoz, *Instructions secrètes aux Grands Profès*, p. 1044). "The Body of Man and the Temple are the repetition of the creation and the image of the Great Temple of the universe" (*Conférences de Lyon*, p. 87).
- ⁷³ Cf. Mazet, "La Conception de la Matière chez Martinez de Pasqually," p. 310. As Willermoz wrote in a letter to Prince Charles of Hesse, the highest stage of Masonic initiation is hermetic and alchemical mystery of Great Work of spiritual regeneration: "Mystical alchemy is the supreme goal of Freemasonry. By the conjunction of the sun and the moon, and by practicing . . . the three symbolic grades,

it will produce a philosophical Child, by which the possessor will prolong his life . . . and thus spiritualize the body" (cited by Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais*, p. 158; cf. Naudon, *Les Hautes Grades*, p. 39).

⁷⁴ *Instructions Secret de Grands Profès*, p. 1045f; Faivre, *Accès*, p. 190; cf. Mazet, "La Conception de la Matière chez Martinez de Pasqually," p. 309. On the symbolism of the Square and Compass, and the columns Joachim and Boas which represent the masculine, active Sun and the passive, feminine Moon see Hutin, *Les Franc-Maçons*, p. 166.

⁷⁵ Faivre, *Accès*, p. 192; *Traité de la Réintégration*, p. 180; in Mazet, "La Conception de la Matière chez Martinez de Pasqually," p. 30. On the recovery of the androgynous state of Adam, see Willermoz, *Instruction Secrète des Grands Profès*.

⁷⁶ *The Origins of Freemasonry*, p. 29f.

⁷⁷ *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (Yale University Press, 1989), p. 2.

⁷⁸ *Living the Enlightenment*, p. 21-22; see also Weisberger, *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment*, pp. 1-2.

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE SHAMANIC IN TIBET AND INNER ASIA

TODD GIBSON

Summary

Historical treatments of the shaman have often been crippled by dubious and untestable assumptions on the nature of shamanic religion. Anthropological investigations in their turn have seldom dealt with historical issues in any depth. The first part of this contribution attempts to point out the advantages and dangers involved in applying an anthropological perspective to historical issues. A broad definition of the shaman is proposed which is anthropological in intent, while avoiding some possible errors in method.

The second part of the article begins by documenting the “shamanic sickness”—widely acknowledged in the ethnological literature—in the careers of several *tertons* (major figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhism), illustrating that the shamanic role was not limited to the healing and divination that are usually associated with Inner Asian shamans. Buddhist derivations for the names of shamans in modern non-Buddhist cultures are presented; these argue for an association between Buddhism and the shamanic in early Inner Asia that went deeper than the mutual borrowing of cultural forms commonly supposed to have taken place.

The Shaman: Definitions and Presuppositions

Shamanism and the shamanic remain popular among scholars. The shaman of modern scholarship, of course, is not the same figure as the Tunguz religious specialist to whom the word strictly applies. Shirokogoroff, the foremost observer of the Tunguz, defined the Tunguz shamans as “persons of both sexes who have mastered spirits, who at their will can introduce these spirits into themselves, and use their power over their spirits in their own interests, particularly helping other people, who suffer from the spirits. In such a capacity they may possess a complex of special methods for dealing with the

spirits.”¹ This definition is undoubtedly accurate, but is valid only for the Tunguzic peoples, and only for the modern period. As Reinhard has remarked, “The situation is, in brief, that there is a Tungusic word, its ultimate origin and meaning uncertain, associated with a Tungusic phenomenon, its ultimate origin and original form uncertain.”² In spite of, or perhaps because of, these uncertainties, the word has increased in lexical scope since its introduction through Russian into the European intellectual sphere, to the point that at present, it seems to have taken on rather distinct sets of connotations in the two scholarly fields where it is most commonly used: the religious-historical and the anthropological.

It would be tedious (and unnecessary for the purposes of the present contribution) to attempt to enumerate, let alone evaluate, the many contemporary definitions of the shaman proposed in recent anthropological literature;³ suffice it to say that the majority of these have in common the theme of individual contact with the extra-human by a spiritual specialist in the service of his community. This contact is distinguished by a state which has been variously referred to as “ecstasy”, “ecstatic contact”, “trance”, and, in more recent years, “altered” or “alternate states of consciousness”. It is also useful to mention that few modern anthropologists use the word without defining their terms.

A very different situation obtains among historians of religion. These specialists, many of whom rely entirely on literary sources for their work, are still often rather careless in their use of the word “shaman”, as if it required no further explanation or qualification. This inexactitude has both fed upon and contributed to a series of assumptions about the nature of the shamanic which might be formulated as follows: 1) “Shamanism” is a word that can be legitimately applied to, and adequately accounts for, a wide variety of non-literate religious complexes, which may or may not be historically related. 2) Shamanism being non-literate, it is therefore pre-literate. 3) Being pre-literate, it is therefore ahistorical, existing unchanged from the dawn of human existence (or at least from the beginnings of a given society). 4) Any element of a culture’s religious landscape

which cannot be accounted for by its prevailing scriptural tradition can be explained as a “vestige” of a primordial shamanistic substrate. Not surprisingly, such vestiges are often considered as being necessarily inferior to scriptural traditions by specialists in the latter.

Thus baldly stated, these assumptions should invite at least a glimmer of intellectual discomfort; the fact nevertheless remains that, overt or implied, they remain extremely influential, particularly in treatments of the various Asian religions.⁴ To thus dismiss the shaman, however, betrays at the very least an ignorance of the anthropological literature on the wide variety of functions that shamanic practitioners play in their respective cultures, and the important variations in these functions across cultural boundaries; it also prematurely shuts the doors to further historical inquiry.

There are, of course, some very good reasons that anthropological studies have not been more utilized by religious historians. Although ethnological data gathered by anthropologists in the field have in the past served as a check to some of the wilder fantasies propounded by armchair theorists of religious history, anthropology is predominantly a synchronic discipline, and has not been much concerned with the development of methodological tools for attempting to extrapolate its findings backwards in time. Still, the inadequacy of using only literary documents (including both canonical and historical) in the study of religious history has not been unrecognized. Forty years ago, Van der Leeuw urged that specialists in religion attempt to integrate the findings of sociologists, psychologists, archaeologists, and others into the field,⁵ and, more recently, Waardenburg has proposed “multiperspective research and interdisciplinary investigations” of religious-historical problems. The alternatives, in his opinion, are “either to become a dignified but closed craftman’s guild, or simply to remain a backward area within the whole of the present scholarly research process.”⁶ The enterprise is not a simple one, however, and is especially subject to methodological pitfalls. The present contribution is an attempt to articulate some of these dangers and suggest means of avoiding them, while showing that anthropological and literary-

historical approaches can complement each other in the study of the shamanic in Inner Asia.

The religious culture of Tibet is an ideal arena for an investigation of historical aspects of the shamanic, since shamanic practitioners playing a wide variety of social roles coexist there with a sophisticated and intellectually acute literary tradition. Further, foreign scholarship on the shaman in Tibet has included both historical and anthropological approaches. The earliest writers on Tibetan religion defined the shamanic in that country in terms of both external paraphernalia (drums, bone ornaments, costumes and masks) and common metaphors of the shaman's purported experiences (spirit flight, and the guiding or ransoming of the "soul") also documented in the non-literate traditions of Siberia.⁷ While these works correctly pointed out the close cultural ties between the Tibetans and other peoples of Inner Asia, they often incorporated the religious-historical framework mentioned above, which assumed the incalculable antiquity of "shamanism". When North Asian shamanic themes were present in a Buddhist context, for example, they were seen at best as adaptations but more commonly as an accommodation or degeneration of a higher religion to conform to popular sensibilities. The superficial and inadequate equating of a hypothetical "early Tibetan shamanism" with the Bon religion, no longer intellectually tenable,⁸ was in most cases part of this approach.

More recent scholarship on so-called shamanic phenomena in the Tibetan cultural sphere has been dominated by anthropologists. Although their definitions of the shaman have varied, and some have attempted to use both literary and ethnographic material, they have generally avoided both a systematic comparison of Tibetan shamanic practitioners with their Northern Asiatic counterparts on one hand,⁹ and serious exploration of their possible historical antecedents on the other.¹⁰ Instead, the shamanic category is more often used to highlight certain aspects of religious practice in relation to a specific societal framework, be it among Tibetans proper or among related peoples such as the Sherpa, Gurung, or Tamang.¹¹ This trend perhaps reaches its apogee with Holmberg, who raises questions regarding the very

existence of “shamanism” as a religious phenomenon separable from its cultural context.¹²

Another recent work, however, has reasserted the importance of a general concept of the shamanic in Tibetan religious history; Samuel uses the term to draw a distinction between two complementary trends operative in Tibetan societies.¹³ His formulation proves useful in describing the development of Tibetan Buddhism, and keeping in mind that the categories he proposes are illustrative rather than dogmatic, his paradigm is a definite improvement on the majority of its predecessors. Samuel’s anthropological orientation avoids the most common methodological error found in historical discussions of the shaman by recognizing that the Buddhistic and the shamanic are not categories that should be placed in opposition, as the former term refers to one or another particular cultural structure, and the latter (if it is to have any real meaning outside the Tunguz context) to a certain mode of religious behavior that might or might not be found within such a given structure. One might very well speak of a Buddhist (or Islamic or Taoist) shaman.¹⁴ This has been pointed out by anthropologists before,¹⁵ but Samuel’s is the first contribution to make it explicit in the sphere of Tibetan religious history.

A second and more subtle methodological error, found in both historical and anthropological works, is to assume that a “shamanic” approach to religious practice implies a certain religious content. This is of course nothing new; Eliade’s definitive summary of shamanic phenomena¹⁶ takes for granted that beliefs in a celestial divinity and ascent to heaven are at once a human universal and the most ancient form of religion. One consequence of this outlook is that Eliade considers as not truly shamans those mediums who operate within the cultural idiom of “spirit possession”. In his turn, Samuel seems to believe that shamanic religion is necessarily associated with some form of the *philosophia perennis*. At one point,¹⁷ he discusses various Buddhist doctrines as “partial and limited approaches to the truth of the shamanic vision”. Samuel’s formulation here appears to be rooted in the positive evaluation of the shaman as exponent of experiential as opposed to textual religion that underlies much of the modern

anthropological interest in the shamanic. Still, his statement cannot be reconciled with his earlier definition unless one assumes a particular and fixed relationship between religion which depends on “altered states of consciousness” and the contents of those altered states.¹⁸

Even beyond this issue, there is a further pitfall in attempting to apply anthropological definitions to shamanic history. It was noted above that most such definitions of the shaman contain an element variously referred to as “trance”, “ecstasy”, or “alternate states of consciousness”. Such terms are problematic both in the modern sphere, and even more in the historical. First of all, it should be obvious that applying the phraseology of “states of consciousness” to societies which may not have developed a language of mentation, and prefer to speak of the shamanic in terms of spirits or deities, is our own cultural imposition. Recognizing that such an imposition may be necessary if we are to talk about the shaman in any general context, we must still attempt to avoid as much as possible projecting onto the shaman our own frameworks of mentational language, as most of the categories that have been proposed in the past are very artificial if not arbitrary,¹⁹ and the problem is only made more complex when attempting to discuss the mentality of earlier cultures.²⁰ This difficulty can be avoided by using criteria which do not depend on such evaluations in the definition of the shaman. One definition that would do so is as follows: if a person is recognized by his own society as being in direct contact with the divine or extrahuman (however that society defines it) by virtue of concrete demonstrations of unusual or unique capabilities, then he or she is a shaman. This definition would simultaneously be more faithful to the Tunguz context than Eliade’s in accepting the full range of cultural idioms which express the shaman’s special capabilities, including both “possession” and “spirit flight”. On the other hand, it would still provide a means of distinguishing between the shaman and other religious specialists. Thus, a ritual practitioner would not be considered as engaging in shamanic practice, even if the purpose were to effectuate a religious purpose for the good of his community, unless the ability to do so was vested in the practitioner himself (because of some

tangible manifestation of his abilities) rather than in his texts, procedures, or apparatus. Historically, evidence of heaven worship could not, *pace* Eliade, be considered as *ipso facto* evidence of shamanic religion, though descriptions of religious specialists who “flew to the sky” might be taken as suggestive of it. It should be noted that this definition of the shaman neither assumes nor precludes any historical association with Inner Asian religious complexes. The ancient Greek seers and oracles would be considered shamans under this definition, but the question of Inner Asian influence on the Greeks would have to be treated separately.²¹

This definition might be considered overly broad by anthropologists, who have the advantage of working in a synchronic field; it also might be felt that it compromises the very factor (“alternate states of consciousness”) that has been responsible for much of the contemporary interest in the shaman. Nevertheless, it is difficult to suggest another definition that allows the historical investigator to remain grounded in descriptive discipline, while avoiding *a priori* judgments on archaic mentality and the existence and nature of shamanic contacts in the remote past.²² In other words, the definition has the advantage of allowing an investigator to label a religious practitioner as a shaman even if there is not sufficient information to know which shamanic idiom or idioms were operative in his society at a given historical moment. The definition is also able to accommodate possible shifts in the shamanic idiom across time within a given society, for example, from a metaphor of “interacting” with spirits to one of “spirit possession.”²³

Buddhist Shamans in Inner Asia

1) The *Terton*

Having suggested an approach for historical investigation of the shamanic, it now remains to illustrate how the definition outlined above can be profitably applied in specific cases. This exposition will begin by relating a phenomena associated with shamanic prac-

titioners in modern ethnological literature to an ongoing religious-historical situation in Tibet.

Among cultures that support shamanic practices, the correlation between puberty and the shaman's "calling" is by now very well documented. This "calling" is marked by a psycho-physiological breakdown followed by reintegration into society in the shamanic role. If the reintegration is unsuccessful, the shamanic candidate may become insane. Sternberg noted over half a century ago that a shaman's election is "manifested by a serious illness, usually at the onset of sexual maturity";²⁴ Bogoras similarly observed that "The shamanistic call begins to manifest itself at an early age, in many cases during the critical period of transition from childhood to youth."²⁵ Eliade's work is replete with ethnological data that further confirm these observations.²⁶ Among present-day Tibetan shamanic practitioners, of both "spirit travel" and "possession" types, Nebesky claims, "Most of the future shamans are stricken by the shaman illness at the age of puberty. The same applies to Tibetan mediums, since most of them, as my informants claimed, became possessed for the first time when reaching sexual maturity."²⁷ Berglie's investigations of nine Tibetan spiritmediums of the *pawo* (*dpa'.bo*) and *lhapa* types revealed that, with one exception, they had begun their careers between ten and sixteen, the median age being thirteen.²⁸ Blo.bzang 'Jigs.med, the twelfth medium of the Gnas.chung oracle spirits, had a shamanic illness that began at ten and climaxed at fourteen, when he became unable to function until recognized as the oracle.²⁹ Lhag.pa Don.grub, the medium of several spirits including the controversial Rdo.rje Shugs.Idan, was first possessed at sixteen,³⁰ while Peter's Tamang informant became a shaman at thirteen.³¹

This connection between adolescence and the shamanic calling can also be discerned in the Tibetan historical literature. Not only does it provide a possible reason for the ancient Tibetan practice of removing a ruler in favor of his son when the latter reached the age of thirteen,³² but, in certain works of the Ghos tradition, the origin of Bon is ascribed to a boy who, at the age of twelve or thirteen, was led all over Tibet by a wandering spirit, and learned all their lore.³³

Further examples of a natural predisposition to the shamanic, in a Buddhist context, can be seen in the biographies of some Tibetan *ter-ton* (*gter.ston*), “treasure revealers”. The *tertons* are men and women, especially associated with the Rnyingma and Bon traditions, who have contributed to an ongoing renewal of religion in Tibet through the revelation of sacred objects and texts (*gter.ma*). These items may be discovered in concrete form in sacred sites, but also may be “unearthed” from the mindstreams of treasure revealers who are held to be rebirths or emanations of the disciples of Padmasambhava.³⁴ The *tertons* have been controversial both within Tibet and without, the more extreme evaluations holding that they were and are merely frauds. A glimpse at their life stories, however, will show that many of them, whatever else they may have been, were shamans according to the present definition.³⁵ A significant number of them, including all five of the so-called “*terton* kings”, seem to have undergone a sort of “shamanic sickness”, most often around adolescence. The first of the “kings”, Nyang.ral Nyi.ma ’Od.zer (1136-1204), began to have visions at the age of eight. According to the biography, “his conduct underwent various changes and everyone held him to be insane”,³⁶ Chos.kyi Dbang.phyug (1212-1270) experienced visions at age thirteen; in one of these he rode a huge vulture across the heavens and met Vajrasattva.³⁷ Rdo.rje Gling.pa (1346-1405) similarly began his visionary career at thirteen, travelling emanationally to the eight great charnel grounds, legendary sacred sites of esoteric Buddhism in India.³⁸ O.rygan Padma Gling.pa (1450-1521) had a sickness before his visions (which, however, seem to have begun at a relatively late age),³⁹ as did ’Jam.dbyangs Mkhyen.rtse Dbang.po (1820-1892), whose visions began at age eight.⁴⁰

Other prominent *tertons* had similar experiences. Ratna Gling.pa’s visions began at age ten,⁴¹ and Mchog.gyur Gling.pa’s at thirteen.⁴² Gter.bdag Gling.pa’s biography seems to indicate a type of eidetic imagery present in his perceptions while still little more than an infant, while his first vision of Padmasambhava occurred at age ten.⁴³

The testimony of these biographies as regards the “shamanic sickness” and related visionary experience need not be regarded with too

jaundiced an eye. While description of the revelatory vision of the *gter.ma* itself often seems an important component in the acceptance of a discovery,⁴⁴ if having visionary experiences at a young age had been from the beginning of the phenomenon merely an ascriptive and legitimizing characteristic of treasure revealers, one might expect to find it present in virtually all of the biographies, while in fact such youthful visions seem to play no part in the life stories of even such prominent *tertons* as the Fifth Dalai Lama and Mnga'.ris Pan.chen Padma Dbang.rgyal.⁴⁵ Further, as the story of Nyang.ral Nyi.ma 'Od.zer mentioned above indicates, the shamanic sickness was not always seen as indicative of a future religious giant (since he was at first held to be insane). Another example can be found in the figure of Jo.mo Sman.mo (1248-1283), whose sickness and visions were also not initially sanctioned as indicating a *terton* by her society. Her biography claims that, although a few had faith in her when she began her career (also at thirteen), the majority disregarded her, thinking she was possessed by a *sman.mo* spirit.⁴⁶

The correlations from ethnological data argue powerfully against the idea of the *tertons*' revelatory experiences being complete invention. While the so-called "legitimizing strategies" of the treasure revealers may indeed be in some cases self-conscious, even deceptive, efforts at acceptance among the population at large as well as among those religious specialists who evaluate their credentials,⁴⁷ seen against the broader background of Tibetan cultural history, it is clear that the phenomenon of treasure revelation is continuous with a strong shamanic tradition.

The same correlations might, however, lead to an inverse conclusion: that shamanic *tertons* are no different from other Tibetan shamans except that they have chosen to express themselves in the framework of earlier scriptural Buddhism instead of (or, more often, in addition to) that of Tibetan popular religion. The difficulties in such a conception, however, seem almost insuperable when the treasure revealer is compared to another type of Tibetan shaman: the medium who is possessed by the deities who are consulted in government functioning. Like the *tertons* discussed above, these mediums may

have a predisposition to the shamanic as evidenced by the shamanic sickness;⁴⁸ and also like them, they may have to undergo stringent tests to gain social validation of their status.⁴⁹ The differences between the two, however, are significant. The *terton* may influence his society by synthesizing fresh religious approaches (within a Buddhist context),⁵⁰ while the communications of the oracle mediums are often enigmatic and require interpretation by the clergy, and are moreover generally limited in content to advice on immediate practical problems. While the *terton* often acts in ways that violate established social norms,⁵¹ the medium's shamanic idiom—possession by a powerful spirit who is nonetheless subject to the Buddhist hierarchy—requires that he negate his own individuality as the vessel of the deity. The induction procedure that results in the possession of the oracle is unchanging and choreographed, while the visions that contribute to the *terton*'s legitimation apparently may occur spontaneously (although it seems that most *tertons* undergo training in esoteric Buddhist disciplines). The question of why an individual with a psychological predisposition towards the shamanic becomes a possessed oracle or shamanic healer rather than a *terton* is probably ultimately unanswerable (and is certainly not within the scope of the present work), though factors such as societal or familial expectations may have their influences. It is important to recognize, however, that in some Tibetan Buddhist circles the religious role of the predisposed shaman is not limited to pragmatic matters, but may encompass the soteriological concerns which lie at the heart of Buddhism.

2) The Healing Shamans

The cultural history of another Tibetan shaman, the previously mentioned *pawo*, is also relevant to the present discussion. The *pawo* has been taken as a typical example of what shamans in Tibet before the coming of Buddhism might have been like; Nebesky calls the *pawo* “a remnant of the earliest, unorganized Bon [*sic*] as it existed before the so-called 'white Bon' . . . had developed after the example of Buddhism”.⁵² This evaluation, though there is little or no real

evidence to back it up, might nevertheless be accepted except for the fact that the word *dpa'.bo* is also used in canonical Tibetan Buddhist texts of all schools,⁵³ as a translation of the Sanskrit word *vira*, “hero”, a word which in esoteric Buddhism may refer either to 1) an accomplished Vajrayāna practitioner or teacher, 2) the chief deity of the esoteric mandala itself, or 3) one of the nine qualities possessed by this deity, which are derived from Indian dance.⁵⁴

It might be thought that the two meanings of *pawo* in the Tibetan contexts have nothing to do with each other.⁵⁵ This, however, is dubious, since at least some *pawos* accept Padmasambhava as the founder of their order,⁵⁶ and since many of them wear as part of their shamanic apparel the *rigs lnga*, a crown which is of esoteric Buddhist provenance.⁵⁷ The implications of the fact that the *pawo* incorporates elements of the regalia, terminology, and legendary history of esoteric Buddhism into his frame of reference (which seems to have little to do with scriptural Buddhism) are unclear. The situation could be explained by either a wholesale appropriation of the Vajrayāna by an earlier shamanic tradition, or a shift in shamanic idiom and a corresponding semantic shift of the *pawo* term on the part of Vajrayāna practitioners. Owing to the pervasiveness of Buddhism in Tibetan societies, neither possibility can be ruled out, but there are other contemporary Inner Asian cultures in which the word used for shamanic practitioners is historically related to Buddhism, and, significantly, these are cultures which now know little or nothing of that religion. Shamans among the Turkmen and Karakalpaks, for example, are known as *porkhan* and *parkhon* respectively; these are certainly related to *burxan*, the word meaning “Buddha” (as personage, principle, and even Buddha image) in early Turkic texts (and retaining its meaning in modern Mongolian).⁵⁸ Shamanic practitioners are called *baksi* by the Kazakh, and *bakshi* among the Kirghiz and Uzbeks, and these can be seen as deriving from *bakshi*, a word of probable Chinese origin⁵⁹ but used among Inner Asian Buddhists as a term for “teacher”.⁶⁰ The use of these words must be seen as indicating that, at a certain point in the history of these cultural groups, shamans were predominantly if not exclusively Buddhist shamans, or

at least that the most essential of the shaman's functions had derived from Buddhism.

Such an assertion has important implications for both the history of the shamanic and that of Buddhism. First and most basically, the parallels in the Turkic languages add weight to the case for a derivation of the Tunguz *shaman* from *śramana*. Secondly, that several different Buddhist words are used to refer to the shaman (*śramana*—*shaman*, *vira*—*dpa'.bo*, *burxan*, and *bakshi*) indicates that Buddhism's effects cannot be explained by positing a single wave of cultural influence, but must be seen as a process that was repeated several times.

The linguistic evidence also argues against the idea that the relationship of the shaman to the prevailing Buddhist ideology was a matter of enmity or even mere toleration. Had Buddhism not been intimately concerned with the special qualities that distinguish the shaman, it is highly unlikely that Buddhist terms would have come into widespread use in this context, and that these terms would have been preserved even after all trace of scriptural Buddhism had disappeared among the Turks and Tunguz.⁶¹

These data do not, of course, support an assumption that all shamans in Inner Asia were a product of Buddhist influence. As seen above (note 32), there is also an apparent connection between the shaman and Inner Asian polity; this relationship may well antedate Buddhist influence but in any case seems independent of it. It might even be speculated that the decline of such political institutions as clan organization or the sacral kingship created a religious vacuum that Buddhist shamans helped to fill. The fact that Buddhism offered methods for cultivating shamanic qualities which were less dependent on inherited predisposition and hence, perhaps on clan structure, could only have aided in its acceptance.

That Buddhist shamans left a lasting cultural influence on popular religion in Inner Asia certainly does not imply that they were limited in their outlook to the pragmatic, nor in their activities to the healing which typifies the modern Tunguz and Turkic shamans. From the time of the Kushan Empire, Buddhism in the region produced a civilization of its own that not only reflected but influenced development

in India and China, and the example of the Tibetan *terton* has shown that the religious sphere of the shaman (even a shaman who had to overcome psychological imbalance in his youth) might well include contributions to Buddhist literature. The absence of such occupations among the shamans of contemporary Inner Asian societies can easily be explained by the decline in a supportive Buddhist establishment, or the conversion of a people to another religion in which the shaman's expression of his experience was more closely constrained by ideology.

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¹ Shirokogoroff, 1935: 269.

² Reinhard, 1976: 14. The origin of the Tunguzic word has been a matter of some controversy. A derivation from the Sanskrit *śramana* (through the Tocharian *samane* or the Sogdian *śmn*) has been accepted by many, and a strong case, based on ethnographic data as well as linguistic hypothesis, can still be made for this theory (Eliade: 1964: 495-507; any serious discussion of the relationship between Buddhism and the shamans of Siberia must take this work into account). This derivation is not universally accepted; Altaic linguists especially have frequently sought alternatives, though these have sometimes presupposed a genetic relationship among the Altaic languages which is becoming increasingly questionable. Lot-Falck (1977: 9-10) argues that the root *śam* is common to all Altaic languages; it should be noted, however, that her objection to an Indian/Iranian provenance is based on religious-historical hypothesis rather than strictly linguistic criteria (as is that of Hultkrantz, 1973: 26). Kingsley (1944: 195 and note 34) cites sources unavailable to me that argue for an Iranian derivation; these may be a reiteration of the Tocharian and Sogdian possibilities mentioned above. See also Voigt (1984: 15 and notes 9 and 10) on the Altaicists.

³ A sample of the most thoughtful discussions would include those of Reinhard (1976), Hultkrantz (1978), Siikala (1978), and Lewis (1984).

⁴ A fairly recent survey on the culture and religion of Mongolia (Jagchid and Hyer, 1979) summarized the whole of non-literate religion in that country with the statement (p. 165) that "From ancient times to the present, Shamanism has shown little or no development, but has remained very primitive and is generally not highly regarded by students of comparative religion."

⁵ Kitagawa, 1987: 22.

⁶ Waardenburg, 1978: 55.

⁷ See Eliade (1964: 430-441), Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975: 538-53), and Hoffmann (1979: 1-27).

⁸ See Snellgrove (1987: 388-407).

⁹ See Berglie (1978) for an exception. Berglie finds similarities between Siberian and Tibetan healing shamans (*pawo*) at every level except that of social status. For more on the *pawo*, see also Berglie (1980), and Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975: 425-428).

¹⁰ An exception here is de Sales (1994).

¹¹ See Hitchcock (1976), Peters (1982), Mumford (1989), and Holmberg (1989).

¹² Holmberg, 1989: 142-146.

¹³ Samuel (1993: 8) defines shamanic religion as “the regulation and transformation of human life and human society through the use (or purported use) of alternate states of consciousness by means of which specialist practitioners are held to communicate with a mode of reality alternative to, and more fundamental than, the world of everyday experience”. Clerical religion, on the other hand, is text-based, philosophically oriented, and historically concerned with political power.

¹⁴ There are, of course, competent historical studies which treat the supposed conflict of Buddhism and “shamanism” in Inner Asia and the Himalaya; see, for example, Heissig (1953). Such conflicts, however, seem to have been based either on Buddhist objections to certain religious practices such as blood sacrifices and ancestor worship (which have no clear connection with shamanic religion by any anthropological definition) or else on social and political issues that a theory of competing religious systems does not adequately account for. The work cited, as well as other of this sort, does not attempt to define the shaman, but rather uses the terms “shamanism” and “shamanistic” in the sense of an archaic, preliterate set of beliefs.

¹⁵ Cf. the discussions in Aziz (1976: 343-344) and Hultkrantz (1973: 36-37).

¹⁶ Eliade, 1964: especially pp. 504-507.

¹⁷ Samuel, 1993: 503.

¹⁸ Even in the Buddhist context he is concerned with, Samuel’s is still an awkward statement. While the point of view that claims that all verbal formulations of religious experience are imperfect is certainly implicit if not explicit in much Buddhist literature, this is logically quite a different thing from asserting that all religious experience is therefore equivalent. Although Samuel (1993: 504) cites a single exemplar of such an outlook, and it may be that some followers of the Tibetan *gzhan stong* (“other emptiness”) trend in particular may have held that there is a positive existent which lies behind religious experience, to claim that all followers and teachers of “shamanic Buddhism” in Tibet had such a philosophical formulation at the back of their minds (as Samuel seems to do) is not in the least justifiable historically.

¹⁹ Hultkrantz (1978: 41-51) and Rouget (1985: 3-46) have discussed at some length the difficulties involved in evaluating psychological processes for the purpose of defining the shaman.

²⁰ Adkins (1970) examines the historical development of mental language among the early Greeks; his discussion of the terms *phrenes*, *psyche*, *nous*, etc. should be required reading for those religious historians who persist in considering belief in a "plurality of souls" to be a common feature of "archaic" cultures. Jaynes (1976) has pointed out the historical problems involved in attributing modern frameworks of mentation to ancient humanity.

²¹ On this controversy, see Kingsley (1994).

²² The definition would absolutely disallow, for example, any possibility of labelling the cave paintings at Lascaux as "shamanistic" (cf. Eliade, 1964: 503), in the absence of more complete knowledge of Paleolithic society than can presently be established. These works may well have been rendered by artists who would meet the present definition of the shaman, but such an assertion is neither demonstrable nor disprovable.

²³ Bourguignon (1976) notes that "possession trance" is a shamanic idiom that can be statistically associated, in modern times, with social characteristics such as class stratification, evolved political jurisdictions, and population above the 100,000 mark. While Lewis (1984: 6) has rightly criticized a tendency to overgeneralize from such statistical data (an undertaking which is even riskier in a historical context), there are reasonable justifications for positing such an association: a shaman whose religious authority is dependent on the prominence of the deity that possesses him rather than his own human self is certainly less of a threat to an established religious and political order. In the Tibetan context, this would argue against the often-repeated *a priori* argument (Peter, 1976: 212, 1978: 328; Tewari, 1987: 140; Aris, 1988: 60) that the possessed oracle institution predated Buddhism.

Basilov (1992: 16-17) has argued that shamanic idioms among the Turkic peoples of Inner Asia reflect an attempt to bring shamanic activity in line with scriptural Islam.

²⁴ Cited by Peters (1982: 23).

²⁵ Cited by Hoffmann (1950: 74).

²⁶ Eliade, 1964: especially pp. 15-32.

²⁷ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 550.

²⁸ Berglie, 1978: 40-41.

²⁹ Avedon, 1984: 203-210.

³⁰ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 432. For Tibetan sources on the Shungs.lan controversy, see Kapstein (1989: 231 note 40).

³¹ Peters, 1982: 23.

³² For a discussion of shamanic elements in the ancient Tibetan sacral kingship, see Gibson (1991). A connection between the shaman and the Türkic sacral kingship

has been perceived by Waida (1976). Other scholars have posited a “shamanic aristocracy” in early Inner Asia; see Heissing (1980: 6 and 114 note 2) and Voigt (1984: 16 and note 17) for sources. Johansen (1987) also raises interesting questions on the relationship between Inner Asian polity and shamanic religion, and it may be germane to note that the Tamang shaman who was Peters’ informant (1982) placed legendary king Gesar at the highest point in his shamanic cosmology.

³³ See, for example, Dpa’bo Gtsug.lag ’Phreng.ba (1962: 8); the similarity of these etiologies to descriptions of the shamanic calling was earlier pointed out by Hoffmann (1950: 98). Of course, the notion of these historical sources that the entire Bon tradition originated in a single nameless shamanic practitioner cannot be regarded seriously.

³⁴ For a bibliography of non-Tibetan scholarship treating this phenomena, see Gyatso (1993: 103 note 14); see Thondup (1988) for an emic English-language description of the treasure tradition.

³⁵ The stories drawn on here were taken from the history by the late Rnyingma hierarch ‘Jigs.’bral Ye.shes Rdo.rje, Bdud,’joms Rinpoche, translated by Dorje and Kapstein; for his sources, see ‘Jigs.bral, (1991, vol. 2: 69 note 977) and Gyatso (1993: 99 note 5). Since this is a modern work, the possibility that some biographical material may have been altered over the centuries to meet societal expectations must be admitted, but this would not seem to materially affect the argument presented here.

³⁶ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 755.

³⁷ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 762-764.

³⁸ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 789.

³⁹ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 796. Aris (1988: 53-63) discusses Padma Gling.pa’s visionary experiences in terms of a shamanic-“tantric” interface, but the typology he proposes for distinguishing between the shamanic idioms derived from esoteric Buddhism and those derived from Northern Asiatic culture is inadequate, as he himself admits (p. 60). His critique is moreover crippled by his attempts to “expose” Padma Gling.pa by attributing his visionary experience to self-delusion and unconscious embellishment (if not wholesale contrivance). Such criticisms could be levelled equally well at every single religious experience in mankind’s history. Aris’ discussion highlights another advantage in avoiding attempts to evaluate the shaman’s mental processes in defining the term; a shamanic *terton*, like any other shaman, can only be judged as genuine or not within the bounds of the criteria accepted by his own culture.

⁴⁰ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 854.

⁴¹ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 793.

⁴² ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 841.

⁴³ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 825.

⁴⁴ Gyatso, 1993: 122-123.

⁴⁵ ‘Jigs.bral, 1991: 805-808 and 821-824.

⁴⁶ 'Jigs.bral, 1991: 771-772. The *sman.mo* seems to be related to the *mu.sman* mentioned in the Old Tibetan documents; they were deities who spoke through elder women. On the *sman.mo*, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975: 198-202); for the *mu.sman*, see MacDonald (1971: 275, 294). For other, perhaps parallel, cases of shamanic women as religious figures in post-Imperial Tibet, see Martin (forthcoming).

⁴⁷ Gyatso's fine treatments of some of the religious issues raised by the figure of the *terton* (1993, 1994) have not yet thoroughly addressed the institution's historical evolution. Such a study, including information on changing trends in the content of *gter.ma*, and a comparison with the history of the Bonpo treasure cycles, could certainly reveal much about Tibetan religious and social history.

⁴⁸ As in the case of the *terton*, it is not necessary for the possessed medium to be a shaman from birth (cf. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 549); the oracles possessed by the *rong btsan* at Matho monastery in Ladakh, for example, are chosen by lot annually from among the resident monks, and come to the experiences that define them as shamans through religious training (Dargyay, 1985: 56; Tewari, 1987: 143).

⁴⁹ On the tests that legitimate the state oracles, see Avedon (1984: 210-212) and Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975: 419-421).

⁵⁰ Among the Rnyingmapa schools, scriptures derived from *tertens'* visionary experience may gain canonical status comparable to Vajrayāna material from India.

⁵¹ Thondup, 1986: 157.

⁵² Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 425.

⁵³ See, for example, the *Hevajra Tantra* Part II, CH.V, ln. 3; II, V, 26 (Snellgrove, 1959: 77, 81): According to the editor, this tantra is known to have existed in its present form towards the end of the eighth century. See also the index to the *Samvarodaya Tantra* in Tsuda (1974) for frequent mentions; this tantra, according to the editor (p. vii) "cannot be earlier than the late eighth century".

⁵⁴ Snellgrove (1959: 111) lists these as "passion, heroism, loathsomeness, horror, mirth, frightfulness, compassion, wonderment, tranquility". See also Guenther (1984: 126).

⁵⁵ *Khenpo* Dpal.ldan Shes.rab, learned scholar of the Rnyingmapa school, distinguished the two by saying that while the *pawo* of the Vajrayāna is so named because of his confidence, derived from unshakeable spiritual experience, the *pawo* who is a vehicle for the spirits is merely in "a sort of trance".

⁵⁶ Berglie, 1980: 43.

⁵⁷ Berglie, 1978.

⁵⁸ See Basilov (1976, 1992) for the ethnology of these shamans, Clauson (1972: 360) for the linguistic derivation. Dankoff (1975: 69-70) comments that unlike other Turkic Buddhist terms, *burxan* was too closely associated with Buddhism to be incorporated into the Islamic literature of the later Turks. See Lessing (1982: 139-140 and 1165) for the Mongolian usage.

The derivations for the Turkic words which appear in Basilov's later article (1992: 5 note 3) are confused and unsupported, and may be a translator's or editor's error.

⁵⁹ Lot-Falck (1977: 17) citing Paul Pelliot, who gives the meaning "homme de grand savoir".

⁶⁰ A notable historical example is Karma Pakshi (1204-1283), second in the Karmapa line of reincarnate lamas, who allegedly dazzled the Tangut and Mongol courts with supernatural feats; see Roerich (1979: 485-487). See Lessing (1982: 70) for the Mongolian usage of *bagshi*.

⁶¹ This concern has been continued in an attenuated form even among those schools of Tibetan Buddhism in which shamanic qualities are least valued. In Mongolia, according to Eliade (1964: 498), the Buddhist clergy encourage emotionally disturbed individuals to become shamans. I had the opportunity of confirming this with the Mongol scholar Chöje Lama; he added in an ironical tone that some such individuals made very good shamans while others did not.

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APOCALYPSES REAL AND ALLEGED IN THE MANI CODEX¹

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Summary

The florilegium of revelations that Mani adduces as proof of his own authority in the *Cologne Mani Codex* has stimulated research into the circulation and influence of Jewish apocalypses among the various Jewish-Christian sects of late antiquity. But it has also proved frustrating, since not one of the apocalyptic “texts” that Mani quotes matches extant apocalypses in the name of Enoch, Adam, Seth, or Enosh. Considering the breadth of the Enoch literature now known from textual and patristic sources, including Manichaeae literature, the absence of a parallel for Mani’s Enoch-“quotation” may be reason to suspect that Mani invented this quotation as well as the others. This paper proposes an interpretation of Mani’s apocalyptic florilegium that depends not on the historical existence of the putative texts but on Mani’s own distinctive scheme of prophetic lineage and authority. It is argued that Mani’s universalist view of mission and religion led him to revise existing schemes of Jewish revelatory heroes that were traditional to Jewish and Jewish-Christian sects and that invoked the patriarchs constitutive of Jewish identity, like Abraham, Moses, and Elijah. In contrast, Mani promotes his revelation’s ecumenical appeal by casting himself in a line of biblical figures who in the late antique world had especially universalist significance: Adam, Seth, and Enoch (all antediluvian and therefore pre-covenantal) and Paul (Mani’s model of an ecumenical missionary).

For those scholars interested in the “life-context” of Jewish apocalypses in antiquity Mani’s odd little autobiography, “On the Origin of His Body,” has proved itself a veritable windfall.² For here among the various reminiscences of Mani’s life the disciple Baraies quoted Mani explicitly invoking “apocalypses” of Adam, Sethel, Enosh, Shem, and Enoch. If the Mani codex had already vastly expanded our knowledge of the ancient Jewish-Christian group the Elchasaites, then Mani through Baraies revealed their library catalogue.

Or did he? I would like to suggest that this highly desirable assumption may be premature and that this “florilegium” of apocalyptic

incipits assembled by Mani might be governed—at least in part—by an ideological scheme. I want at least to lay out the possibility that the florilegium’s alleged “sources” were invented for the purpose of locating Mani in the lineage of a particular type of revelatory hero.

I. Problems in the “Sources” of the Florilegium

Let us look first at the framing material in which the alleged apocalypses appear:

[Thus] first Adam [...] said [in] his [Apocalypse]: ...

Likewise, also Sethel, his son, has written thus in his Apocalyps e, saying: “I opened my eyes and beheld before my face [an angel], ...”

Again in the Apocalypse of Enosh it reads thus: “In the third year, on the tenth month, I went out for a walk into the desert land, ...”

Likewise, also, Shem spoke in this way in his Apocalypse: ...

Again Enoch spoke in this way in his Apocalypse: ...

Likewise we know that the apostle Paul was snatched up to the third heaven, ...

In conclusion, all the most blessed apostles, saviors, evangelists, and prophets of the truth—each of them beheld insofar as the living hope was revealed to him for proclamation. And they wrote down, bequeathed, and stored up for remembrance for [the] future sons of the [divine] Spirit, who will understand the sense of [his] voice.³

It is quite obvious, from a form-critical perspective, that this list is not a library catalogue. Even if the introductory phrases and the accurate quotation of the Pauline material might *imply* the prior literary existence of the testimonies, the text nowhere gives any explicit indication of documenting books read among the Elchasaites or others.⁴ The list functions, rather, to ground Mani’s own concept of authority in a sacred lineage of predecessors. This function emerges most vividly in the preface and conclusion to the list:

... [E]ach one of the forefathers showed his own *apokalypsis* to his elect, which he chose and brought together in that generation in which he appeared, and how he wrote (it) and bequeathed (it) to posterity ...

Also in this way, it is fitting for the all-praiseworthy apostle (Mani), through whom and from whom has come to us the hope and inheritance of life, to write to us ...⁵

The list goes beyond mere lineage to reflect the intrinsic importance of turning one's revelations into *text*. More than simply privileged to meet angels and tour heaven, Adam, Sethel, and the rest were specifically instructed *to write down* their revelations. In a world replete with legends of prophets, oral teachings of prophets, and rumors of new prophets Mani put special importance on the book as the guarantee of authentic and authoritative revelation.⁶ And, since Mani criticized Zoroaster, the Buddha, and Jesus for not writing down their *ipsissima verba*, Jewish apocalypses may have initially stood as the paradigms of properly recorded heavenly teachings.⁷ Their emotional call-narratives and glorious supernatural imagery echoed Mani's own intense religious experiences of his heavenly Twin. But even more, their self-conscious scribality with its intrinsic implication of heavenly authority presented itself as the quintessential way of establishing one's message in a competitive religious world.⁸

But then, from a literary perspective, we are talking about Mani's appeal not to particular historical texts but rather to the *idea* of Jewish apocalypses, their typical structures and visions, and their constructions of literary authority.

Now, when someone says that he is quoting something and gives the title, the historian tends to believe that book existed. The Epistle of Jude, after all, quotes the Enochic Book of the Watchers (1:9) accurately in citing what "Enoch prophesied" (Jude 14). But this kind of assumption can in many cases be highly misleading. That fourth-century historiographical enigma known as the *Historia Augusta* cites numerous books whose existence is highly doubtful.⁹ And in such "bibliolatrous" cultures as the Middle East produced, among whom the mere notion of book or "source" carried mythical overtones, the citation of books could be an imaginative act, an appeal to the notion of heavenly or secret books and one's own authorial lineage to such books.¹⁰ Why in this particular case should we be skeptical about the existence of the cited books?

My and perhaps others' suspicions that these books may not have been "all there" were initially raised by the quotation from the "apocalypse" of Enoch, which has no parallel in extant Enoch literature.

This observation would be insignificant were it not for the enormity of the extant corpus of Enoch books and fragments.¹¹ Thus one might begin to wonder, has Mani or Baraies coined a kind of “archetypal” Enoch apocalypse, the verisimilitude of which would be guaranteed by its similarity to other Enoch apocalypses of the ancient world, with some of which we know Mani was acquainted?¹²

And since none of the other “apocalypses,” of Adam, Seth, or Enosh, match known pseudepigrapha either, might they too be made up along the same lines—pretending to be the revelatory testimonies of antediluvian heroes whom anyone of that period would have expected to issue apocalypses?¹³

At this point one needs to propose some kind of rationale for the invention of apocalypses in these figures’ names. And this rationale must lie in Mani’s selection of antediluvian figures. The scholar of early Judaism, for example, could hardly avoid noticing that a fairly large corpus of pseudepigrapha in the names of post-diluvian figures—Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Baruch, Ezra—that were probably circulating quite widely by the third century have not been “quoted” in Mani’s florilegium. What meaning might we infer from a selection of revealers active before the flood?

II. Themes in the Construction of the Florilegium: The Genealogy of the True Prophet

One must begin with the tradition of the revealer-list itself, upon which Mani’s apocalyptic florilegium seems to be based. Scholars of Mani and his world have noted the strong influence of that ancient Semitic notion of the “True Prophet,” a divine mediator figure believed to rest upon certain figures in history at intervals continuing up through the end of the world.¹⁴ The idea of a chain of especially privileged seers became particularly popular among Jewish-Christians of the Middle East, who employed it to describe the nature of the divine presence in Jesus. For example, discussions of the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementine texts offer the list: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.¹⁵ Among the Elchasaites too there

was the view, according to Hippolytus, “that there is one [Christ] above and that he is infused into many bodies frequently and now is in Jesus.”¹⁶ Epiphanius adds that the heavenly figure concerned “is a spirit and stands above the angels. . . He comes into the world when he wishes, for he came into Adam and appeared to the patriarchs clothed with a body. He is the same who went to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and who came at the end of the times” in human form as Jesus.¹⁷ In its emphasis on Abraham and often Moses, in its echoes of the peregrinations of Wisdom in Ben Sira, in its very basis in the Book of Deuteronomy, the True Prophet tradition must be said to be Jewish in essence.¹⁸

The prophet Elchasai himself, founder of Mani’s birth-community, seems to have been viewed in Elchasaite tradition as an avatar of the True Prophet. Indeed, there is some evidence that the Elchasaite took Mani as “the False Prophet,” the True Prophet’s negative counterpart in the end-times.¹⁹ So in one sense Mani understood his own position in the chain of patriarchs in quite traditional terms: he is the recipient of “great mysteries” and “secrets” revealed by his heavenly “Twin” just as the antediluvian seers had encountered them with angels.²⁰ And here Mani’s development of the True Prophet tradition made a crucial addition: the revelatory lineage consisted not simply of legendary “appearances” (as in the Pseudo-Clementine texts) but of legendary *apocalypses*, texts in which the seers had recorded the wisdom they had received, standing symbolically as monuments to each encounter with the heavenly world.²¹

By the third century CE the term *apokalypsis* had come to be reified as a category of literary genre. We see this development in the reference titles of the Nag Hammadi Library, in the complaint of Synesius of Cyrene that people around him were producing “dreams that they call apocalypses,” which filled him with dread, and in the witness of Porphyry to “*apokalypseis* of Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messus and other people of the kind.”²² But this reification of *apokalypsis* did not render it as some mundane species of codex. For the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies the true *apokalypsis* is “what is untaught, without visions and dreams,” what “becomes

known not by instruction but understanding,” and which thereby distinguishes the just and pure from the unjust and impious recipient of heavenly knowledge.²³ In Mani’s usage *apokalypsis* constitutes a model for the disclosure of heavenly secrets, bringing together in one concept the affective impact of revelation on the seer, the self-authenticating nature of the alleged experience and the ensuing text, and the legendary preparation of that text as a sacred object transmitted among generations.

The impact of this idealized sense of *apokalypsis* emerges in Mani’s other crucial change to the True Prophet lineage. Deeply influenced by Marcionite notions of biblical theology and authority Mani had once come into conflict with the Elchasaites over his appeal to Pauline and other “Gentile” scripture, where the Elchasaites gave primary authority to texts, biblical and extracanonical, that were firmly rooted in Judaism and Jewish-Christian tradition.²⁴ But how then could Mani reconcile his fascination with the “True Prophet” tradition or with Jewish apocalypticism with his neo-Marcionite ideology? Mani must have understood Jewish apocalypses and their seers independently of the Jewish biblical tradition (in its broad sense).²⁵ And it is in this separation of apocalypticism from its Jewish basis that the essential Jewish patriarchs of the “True Prophet” tradition—and indeed of most extant apocalypses—were shoved aside in favor of more mysterious, antediluvian patriarchs like Adam, Seth, and Enoch.

III. The Significance of the Antediluvian Seer in the Manichaean Mission

Antediluvian heroes had become, in early Judaism, the putative discoverers and spokesmen for whatever areas of knowledge were not obviously biblical and sometimes patently foreign: astrology, alchemy, magic.²⁶ In this way by Mani’s era these particular Hebrew figures had achieved a place among the most important of a vast number of legendary seers in the Mediterranean world, like Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistos, Hystaspes, Ostanes, and such names as have come down to us only in the *incipits* to magical spells.²⁷

With such associations, antediluvian figures (and their alleged writings) could function much better as ecumenical—pan-Mediterranean—culture-heroes (even syncretizing with other ecumenical culture heroes), than the patriarchs and prophets, whose deep, covenantal links to Jewish (and Jewish-Christian) identity and religious concerns constituted an integral part of their legends. Ephraem Syrus and Augustine of Hippo make clear that Manichaeans had no use for the Hebrew prophets, God, or Bible in general and that the sect actually put a much higher store in Sibylline, Hermetic, and Orphic writings, which represented a kind of revelatory eclecticism and ecumenism that was basic to the Manichaean movement.²⁸

Certainly Abraham *could* come off as a legendary astrologer, Moses as a legendary *magos*. But from an ancient Jewish-Christian perspective, or in Mani's particular ideological world, these figures were inseparable from the Jewish traditions through which the Babylonian sects defined themselves.²⁹ One could scarcely imagine Ezra being credited with an ecumenical message; and the Hebrew prophets, legendary crusaders for the worship of the one god YHWH, were often singled out for disdain in Manichaean tradition.³⁰ Antediluvian figures could, to be sure, appear as Jewish culture heroes—even as proto-priests—in early Jewish apocalypses like 1 Enoch and Jubilees. But their literary antiquity seems to have rendered them safe for ecumenical appropriation—even magnetic in their potential for pan-Mediterranean authority. Thus a figure like Enoch or Seth could be brought together with the Greco-Egyptian Hermes Trismegistos; an Apocalypse of Adam from Nag Hammadi grounds a particularly ecumenical compendium of savior traditions from around the Mediterranean world; and Seth functions as a primary Gnostic revealer in three Nag Hammadi tractates and as the sole object of a Manichaean hymn from Egypt.³¹ It is precisely this scope of revelatory authority that Manichaeans both enjoyed and promoted.³²

We must also recognize that each antediluvian patriarch in Mani's apocalyptic florilegium is cast as a kind of apostle to outsiders.³³

Indeed, it was not just Marcionite attitudes that led Mani to affiliate himself with a lineage of pre-Jewish patriarchs. Mani's entire self-image was as "missionary to the world," as one spreading a religion across all ethnic boundaries. It is of particular importance that this very florilegium concludes with the example of Paul's ascent, for Paul and his own self-consciously ecumenical mission provided Mani with his greatest model.³⁴ Mani (and consequently Manichaeism) conceived himself as the culmination of all religions, an apostle to the cosmos at large, and thus transcendent of all particular doctrines and religions.³⁵ He would, indeed, signal his further shift from the Elchasaites' quasi-Jewish frame of reference in placing himself in "prophetic" succession with Zoroaster and Buddha.³⁶ In all these endeavors Mani departed from the essentially Jewish Christianity of the Babylonian sects, from their apocalyptic literature and "True Prophet" lineages, from that entire genus of 'Hebraistic' identity that elsewhere sought revelatory authority in Testaments of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or apocalypses of Isaiah or Zephaniah.³⁷

It was, ironically, precisely this "Hebraistic" Christianity that seems to have dominated the Egyptian *chōra* into which Manichaean missions moved in the later third century CE; and a hymn from one of these Egyptian Manichaean communities brings the Manichaean rejection of post-diluvian biblical heroes into stark relief. The hymn holds up the identical series of antediluvian heroes as appears in the *CMC*'s apocalyptic florilegium—Adam through Enoch—but now as paragons of fortitude under stress, as martyrs.³⁸ The significance of this martyrological sequence emerges against the contrast of contemporaneous Christian martyrological literature (particularly that literature in circulation in Egypt and North Africa), which commonly cast the Hebrew prophets as proto-martyrs and derived the transcendent powers of martyrdom from, especially, post-diluvian biblical tradition. One reads in such literature of enthusiastic martyrs claiming the names of prophets, legends of prophets' martyrdoms, visions and ascents credited to martyrs.³⁹ The Manichaean hymn, which extends from the antediluvian heroes to a series of apostolic martyrs,

thus draws upon the typically third-century obsession with martyrdom while still refusing to exalt any but antediluvian seers.

IV. Conclusions

Perhaps Mani's most succinct expression of this ecumenical, pan-religious scope appears at the end of the *Kephalaia*:

The writings and the wisdom and the apocalypses and the parables and the psalms of all earlier [religions] were gathered everywhere and came to my [religion] and were added to the wisdom which I revealed. As water will be added to water and becomes much water, so were the ancient books augmented by my writings and became a great wisdom, the like of which was not proclaimed (hitherto) in all ancient generations.⁴⁰

"Ancient books," as Mani conceives them, are precursors to his own revelation. But even more, their international nature—"of all earlier [religions]"—immediately positions him beyond Judaism or Jewish-Christian identity. Antediluvian patriarchs and their putative writings would serve this positioning; post-diluvian patriarchs who taught about covenant and priestly purity (or received such teachings from angels) would not.

What then does this paper suggest about Mani's apocalypses? It offers a literary—or, really, ideological—context in which the apocalyptic florilegium might function even without referring to historically extant texts. That is, the florilegium would constitute only the most general allusion to apocalyptic texts in historical circulation. It was produced not to document library holdings or "sources consulted" but rather with the sheer interests of self-promotion within a sacred lineage of revealers, revealers who, in Mani's view, appropriately *wrote down* their wisdom. Mani—through Baraies—thus chose not the patriarchs of the "True Prophet" tradition, Jewish patriarchs in whose names we have numerous extant apocalypses, but an antediluvian, "pre-Jewish" list of patriarchs who might symbolize his ecumenical, pan-religious authority.

This is no conclusive argument against the historical existence of the cited texts within Mani's own literary milieu; but it is at the

very least a corrective against viewing the list uncritically as a major witness to the use of apocalypses in antiquity. Rather, we may be looking at a more subtle concept of apocalyptic text in late antiquity, in which the production of a book becomes a necessary component of a seer's legend.

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² In general on the *Cologne Mani Codex* and its significance see Albert Henrichs and Ludwig Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)," *ZPE* 5 (1970): 97-217; Albert Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists: a historical confrontation," *HSCP* 77 (1973): 23-59; Ludwig Koenen, "From Baptism to the Gnosis of Manichaeism," *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* 2, ed. Bentley Layton (*Numen* Supp 41; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 734-756; Ithamar Gruenwald, "Manichaeism and Judaism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex," *ZPE* 50 (1983): 29-45; and the conference volume *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Atti del Simposio Internazionale*, ed. Luigi Cirillo (Cosenza: Marra, 1986).

³ *CMC* 48.16-18; 50.8-12; 52.8-13; 55.10-12; 58.6-8; 60.13-16, ed. & tr. Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, *The Cologne Mani Codex: "Concerning the Origin of His Body"*, *SBLTT* 15 (Missoula MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 36-49 (following edition of Albert Henrichs and Ludwig Koenen, "Der Kölner Mani-Kodex [P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780]," *ZPE* 19 [1975]: 1-85).

⁴ Compare, e.g., a library list in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: P. Ash. inv. 3, ed. C.H. Roberts, "Two Oxford Papyri," *ZNW* 37 (1938): 185-188. A closer analogue to Mani's list might be that in 4 Macc 18: 10-19, esp. 14-18, in which biblical heroes are listed in their capacities as authors. I am indebted to Pamela Eisenbaum for this reference.

⁵ *CMC* 47.1-16; 62.9-63.7, ed. & tr. Cameron/Dewey, *Cologne Mani Codex*, 36-37, 48-51.

⁶ This privileging of the book certainly had much broader late antique currency: see, for example, Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 1950: 7 (Uppsala: Lundequistska, 1950).

⁷ H.-J. Polotsky and Carl Schmidt, *Kephalaia* 1 (Manichäische Handschriften der staatlichen Museen, Berlin 1; Stuttgart 1940), 7.27 ff. See also Jes P. Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*, Persian Heritage Series 22 (repr. Delmar NY: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1975), 12, 15-16.

⁸ Cf. Henri-Charles Puech, *Le manichéisme: Son fondateur, sa doctrine* (Paris: Musée Guimet, 1949), 66-67; Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists," 28-29, and L.J.R. Ort, "Mani's Conception of Gnosis," *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo (Colloquio di Messina 13-18 Aprile 1966)*, ed. Ugo Bianchi (*Numen* Supp. 12; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 606-607; John C. Reeves, "Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Manichaean Literature: The Influence of the Enochic Library," *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 173-184.

⁹ See Sir Ronald Syme, "Bogus Authors," *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium 1972/1974* (1976): 311-321.

¹⁰ Note that Moses de Léon deployed numerous pseudo-citations of secret books to ground his *Zohar* in the bibliophilic traditions of thirteenth-century Judaism, traditions that themselves served to locate any "new" revelation according to archaic authorities. See Daniel Chanan Matt, *Zohar: the Book of Enlightenment* (Ramsey NJ: Paulist, 1983), 9, 25-27.

¹¹ In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* "Books of Enoch" are repeatedly cited as authorities for eschatological detail: T.Sim. 5:4; T.Levi 10:5; 14:1; 16:1; T.Jud. 18:1; T.Zeb. 3:4; T.Dan 5:6; T.Naph. 4:1; T.Ben. 9:1. Some citations recall materials in I Enoch (e.g., T.Levi 16:1 = I En 89:59 ff), while others are so vague as merely to appeal to Enoch writings for authority in eschatological predictions (e.g., T.Sim. 5:4; T.Jud. 18:1). One thus detects *both* the authors' particular regard for the extant I Enoch texts *and* their broader devotion to a general "myth" of Enoch scripture. See R.H. Charles, *The Books of Enoch, or I Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), lxxv-lxxvi, on intertextual parallels, and H.W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (SVTP 8; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 39-40, on thematic consistency among the Enoch citations.

¹² On Mani's knowledge of some Enochiana see John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992).

¹³ Although once having proposed "a library containing writings allegedly authored by these biblical 'forefathers'" among the Elchasaites (*Jewish Lore*, 208), John Reeves now approaches conclusions similar to mine in his forthcoming study of Mani's florilegium, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions*, Nag Hammadi Studies (Leiden: Brill, 1996), especially 16-17.

¹⁴ See esp. Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church*, tr. Douglas R.A. Hare (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 65-71; and on

the tradition's legacy in Mani: Puech, *Le manichéisme*, 61-62, 144-146 n.241; Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists," 54-55; Michel Tardieu, *Le manichéisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1981), 19-25; Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985), 158-162; and Reeves, "Pseudepigrapha," 174.

¹⁵ Ps-Cl *Hom* 17.4.3; *Rec* 2.47.

¹⁶ Hippolytus, *Ref.* 10.29.2, ed. & tr. A.F.J. Klijn and G.J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*, *NovT* Supp 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 122-123. Cf. *Ref.* 9.14.1.

¹⁷ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.3.4-5, ed. & tr. Klijn/Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, 178-179.

¹⁸ See Lucien Cerfaux, "Le vrai prophète des Clémentines," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928): 160-162, and esp. Fossum, *The Name of God*, 111-159, on filiation with Jewish "Prophet after Moses." In Ps-Cl *Rec* 3.61 a list of ten juxtaposed (good and evil) "pairs" also reflects a basis in Jewish tradition: extending from Abel (vs. Cain) to Christ (vs. Antichrist), the list includes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses before the Son of Man, Peter, and the "sower of the word." Han Drijvers argues that, more than just "Jewish-Christian," the True Prophet discourses are actually anti-Marcionite polemics, making Mani's own dependence on this tradition all the more ironic: "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Carsten Colpe*, ed. C. Elsas and H.G. Kippenberg (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1990), 314-323 [= Drijvers, *History and Religion in Late Antique Syria* (London: Variorum, 1994), XIV].

¹⁹ Ludwig Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism at the Crossroads of Iranian, Egyptian, Jewish and Christian Thought," *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, 286-291; John C. Reeves, "The 'Elchasaite' Sanhedrin of the Cologne Mani Codex in Light of Second Temple Jewish Sectarian Sources," *JJS* 42 (1991): 88-91.

²⁰ Gedaliahu Stroumsa, "Esotericism in Mani's Thought and Background," *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, 155.

²¹ The subsequently more established list, wherein Mani follows Jesus, Zoroaster, and the Buddha, will imply Mani's superiority by virtue of his having fixed his actual teachings in writing.

²² Synesius, *Ep.* 54; Porphyry, *V. Plotini* 16. See in general Morton Smith, "On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ," *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1983), 9-20.

²³ Ps-Cl *Hom.* 17.14-18; 18.6-7 (quotations from 17.18; 18.6). I am indebted to William Adler for this reference.

²⁴ Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists," 51-53.

²⁵ That is, as it encapsulated notions of purity, religious identity in time and space (including notions of covenant), and otherworldly mediation, all of which might be appropriated (or, occasionally inherited) by “Jewish-Christians” in Syria and Palestine for religious self-definition.

²⁶ As, for example, in Ps-Cl *Rec* 4.27 and the Rabbinic “magical apocalypse” *Sefer Ha-Razim*. Enoch is already represented as such a culture hero in Jubilees (4:17-18) and Pseudo-Eupolemus (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.17.9); see James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQMS 16; Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1984), 180-184.

²⁷ See in general Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* 1-2 (Paris: “Les Belles Lettres,” 1938; repr. New York: Arno, 1975), and Hans Dieter Betz, “The Formation of Authoritative Tradition in the Greek Magical Papyri,” *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* 3, ed. Ben F. Meyer and E.P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 161-170, 236-238.

²⁸ Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 13.1; 15.1; Ephraem, *Prose Refutations* (ed. Mitchell) 2.208. See in general Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm*, 6-7, 12-14.

²⁹ *Abraham*: James E. Bowley, “The Compositions of Abraham,” in Reeves (ed.), *Tracing the Treads*, 231. Abraham is included in but one Manichaean prophet-lineage (out of twelve extant), recorded by the chronographer al-Shahrastani: see Tardieu, *Le manichéisme*, 22, and Reeves, *Heralds of that Good Realm*, 11. *Moses*: John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, SBLMS 16 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 134-161, largely on testimony of PGM. The attempt to render the patriarchs as ecumenical culture-heroes appears most prominently among the fragments of “Judeo-Hellenistic” authors like Eupolemus (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.26.1), Pseudo-Eupolemus (*apud* Eusebius, *ibid.*, 9.17.2-9), and Artapanus (*apud* Eusebius, *ibid.*, 9.18.1; 9.23.1-4; 9.27.1-37).

³⁰ On the Manichaean distaste for Hebrew prophets see *Acta Archelai* 11 (= Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66.30.1-2); Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 9.1 (tr. Bayard Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm* [New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970], 2:794).

³¹ *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V, 5) 77.26-82.28. On Enoch-Hermes syntheses see VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 181-183, and Fodor, “The Origins of the Arabic Legends of the Pyramids,” *Acta Orientalia Hungaricae* 23 (1970): 340-341. Enoch’s status among the Egyptian Gnostic groups responsible for the Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jeu implies a synthesis with Thoth-Hermes: see J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 98-100. *Hymn to Seth*: ed. C.R.C. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book* 2 (Stuttgart, 1938), 144-146, with discussion by André Villey, *Psaumes des errants: Écrits manichéens du Fayyum* (Sources gnostiques et manichéennes 4: Paris: Du Cerf, 1994), 237-246. On Seth-Thoth syntheses see Josephus, *Ant.* 1.69-71; Gospel of the Egyptians (NHC

III.68); Three Steles of Seth (NHC VII, 5); and additional sources discussed in Walter Scott, *Hermetica* 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924-1936; repr. Boulder CO: Shambhala, 1985), 491-492; Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: An Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 29-31.

³² Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Manchester: U.P., 1985), 51, and Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism," 288-291, on Mani's use of a Gnostic *Apocalypse of Nikotheos*. Augustine elsewhere remarks that Manichaeans *anteponunt nonnullas apocryphas* (*De Haeresibus* 46.15, CCSL 46:318).

³³ A crucial observation by Martha Himmelfarb, "Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses," *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium* JSPSS 9, ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 79-81.

³⁴ See Peter Brown, "The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire," *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), 94; Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists," 32-33; Tardieu, *Le manichéisme*, 25-27; and Hans Dieter Betz, "Paul in the Mani Biography," *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, 215-234.

³⁵ See CMC 104.12-105.8.

³⁶ See Tardieu, *Le manichéisme*, 21-25.

³⁷ Cf. Puech, *Le manichéisme*, 62-63. On "Hebraistic" identity in general see Robert Murray, "Jews, Hebrews and Christians: Some Needed Distinctions," *NovT* 24 (1982): 194-208, esp. 205-207, and on its influence in Coptic tradition, David Frankfurter, "The Legacy of the Jewish Apocalypse in Early Christian Communities: Two Regional Trajectories," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. by James C. VanderKam and William Adler (*Corpus Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* III.4; Assen/Maastricht: van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 161-194.

³⁸ "Psalm of Forebearance," ed. Allberry, *Manichaean Psalm-Book* 2, 142, with commentary by Villey, *Psaumes des errants*, 215-222.

³⁹ On the nature of third-century martyrdom ideology in Egypt see David Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt Before Constantine: The Evidence of the Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah*," *VigChr* 48 (1994): 25-47. Compare, on North Africa, Cyprian, *Epp.* 31 and 32.

⁴⁰ *Kephalaia* 154, ed. Carl Schmidt and H.J. Polotsky, "Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten," *SPAW Phil.-Hist.* (1933): 86, tr. Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 335.

Review article

RELIGION IN HITTITE ANATOLIA.
SOME COMMENTS ON “VOLKERT HAAS: GESCHICHTE DER
HETHITISCHEN RELIGION”¹

MANFRED HUTTER

1. Hittite Religion in “Context”

The term “Hittite religion” is a common designation for different religious beliefs and syncretistic tendencies within the central area of the political influence of the Hittites dating from the 18th to the early 12th century B.C.E. As is well known Hittite religion shows different “cultic strata” (“Kultschichten”) which can—in chronological order—mainly be attributed to the Hattians of Anatolian stock, the Indo-European Hittites who are found in central Anatolia from the end of the 3rd millenium, their nearly contemporaneous Luwian neighbours who later on settle in south and southeast Anatolia, and last but not least the Hurrians who begin to play a dominant role since the middle of the 2nd millenium mediating also Syrian and Babylonian thoughts and concepts to Anatolia. Therefore Volkert Haas begins his book with an overview of the historical development in Anatolia (p. 1-38). From the point of view of the history of religions it is important to mention that from the middle of the 3rd millenium to the middle of the 17th century there did not exist a larger political entity but only about 20 local “kingdoms” (e.g., at Alişar, Alaca Höyük, Kültepe/Kaniš, Hattuša or Zalpa). Then the Hittites built their first centre at Kaniš which dominated a larger area but Kaniš soon lost its leading position to Hattuša. From Hattuša the Old Kingdom emerged and Hittite influence extended to the Black Sea, the Upper Euphrates, Northern Syria, and maybe even to the Mediterranean Sea. Since the later 16th century the Luwian population of Kizzuwatna had become an integral and important part of the Hittite sphere being at the crossroads between central Anatolian, Hurrian and Syrian cultures. When in the early 14th century the New Kingdom, the “Hittite Empire”, began to shape its form with the rule of Suppiluliuma I., the ethnic and cultural pluralism still increased as the political expansionism added further foreign elements to “Hittite” culture. Based on this historical context Haas can emphasize throughout his book the connections with Babylonian, Hurrian and

Syrian religious ideas which merge with Hattian and—to a lesser degree—Indo-European Hittite concepts.

Not only historical and political components are important but also the geographical and climatical aspect: From Upper Mesopotamia and Northern Syria to southeast and central Anatolia agriculture and economic life depend on rain which makes cultivation possible. As people are depending on the same atmospheric phenomena for living in these different areas they also express their religious beliefs in a comparable way. Therefore it is not possible to explore Hittite religion without taking into consideration traditions from Syria and Mesopotamia. Special attention is paid to cosmologies and calendar myths, e.g., the myth of the Hurrian grain-god Kumarbi. The myth begins with the succession of godly rulers in heaven—Alalu, Anu, Kumarbi, Tešup, the latter always deposes his predecessor. Haas connects this myth with Babylonian traditions (cf. the Enuma Eliš or the Harab Myth) and puts the different rulers in relation to the (agricultural) year (p. 85f): The new year begins with the castration of Anu by Kumarbi who bites off the former's genitals. As Kumarbi is the grain, he begins his rule with the growing grain in spring (March) but he himself is deposed at the time of harvest (July) by the storm-god Tešup and sent to the netherworld at the time of sowing in September or October. In terms of the calendar Tešup's reign also comes to an end at this time. Alalu with his stormy rains rules during the autumn and Anu from January to March. This "seasonal pattern" and the application of the calendar which Haas also uses for his interpretation of the Ugaritic Baal cycle and the Hittite myth of Illuyanka does not neatly fit these myths.² Maybe it can explain the hostility between Kumarbi and Tešup but it cannot explain why Tešup's rule should have come to an end in October. It also leaves open why Kumarbi should be left on "earth" from July to September during the reign of Tešup who only then sends him—as the new seed—down to the netherworld. Setting these aspects of Hittite-Hurrian religion in connection to other Ancient Near Eastern myths remains unconvincing. That the Kumarbi cycle clearly shows Mesopotamian influences is beyond question but as a whole it must be treated as an expression of Hurrian-Hittite world view of its own right. As there are some cosmogonical traits within the Kumarbi myth—e.g., the castration of Anu, the separation of heaven and earth with a sew made of copper, Kumarbi's helper Upelluri on whose shoulders heaven and earth have been built—it is notable that Haas describes a bulk of cosmogonical traditions from the

Ancient Near East (p. 106-175). As a difference to Mesopotamia—maybe still by chance—we do not have a creation myth written in Hittite but only hints from diverse sources; just to call attention to a few more besides those in the aforementioned Kumarbi texts: Heaven is the abode of the gods with their palaces, maybe some Hittites conceived heaven made from iron, as an opposite to heaven we find the netherworld with the palace of the (Hurrian) queen of the netherworld. This world is situated directly beneath the earth from which entrances like springs and lakes lead to the other world. The Hattian sun-goddess can be called the lady of the netherworld because the sun enters this part of the cosmos in the west in the evening. According to the importance of agriculture we find the idea that the earth brings forth every form of life therefore she is often called “mother” and some goddesses are her hypostases. Altogether one gets the impression that in Anatolia there have not been so many different cosmogonical traditions as in Mesopotamia. Therefore we should not assume that nearly every aspect is common to all cultures in the Ancient Near East.

Another form of “context” concerns diachrony: Haas tries to reach back to prehistory searching for indications of religious beliefs and practices from the neolithic and the early bronze age in Anatolia (p. 39-78) which live further on mainly in the Hattian cultic stratum. The first important change of religion in Anatolia happens as far as we know in the transition period from the aceramic to the ceramic neolithicum. In the later period we find for the first time a kind of organized pantheon and not only the worship of (deified) ancestors as before. Archaeological data from Catal Höyük (ca. 6380-4900) suggest that there already existed—beside the reverence for the ancestors—the worship of individual gods; the most important cults centered on the bull-god and a female deity representing heaven and earth. The continuity of these personifications of the divine is beyond doubt. Goddesses (or statuettes of a woman) from Catal Höyük are often accompanied by one or two felides, a connection which lives on not only during the chalcolithic and bronze ages, but also in Hittite texts the Hattian goddesses Inara and Tetešhapi have striking affinities to leopards (cf. p. 437sq). It is not impossible to argue that the goddess(es) in the neolithic and chalcolithic periods reflect on the theological level the sociological importance of women and matrilineality because some later texts in which goddesses play a dominant role give slight hints to such sociological circumstances; the myth of Illuyanka is certainly the best-known example for this (cf. p. 419sq). The

adoration of the bull-god also lives on but becomes the subject of change, too (cf. p. 315sq). At the beginning of the 3rd millenium—obviously spreading from Mesopotamia—we find the couple bull-god and goddess for the first time. But the goddess connected with the bull in Anatolia is not an Anatolian one but an import from Syria who only secondarily gets mingled with a local Anatolian goddess. A second change—during the 3rd millenium—outrules the bull from the pantheon because the weather-god supersedes him and consequently also takes over the goddess as his own parhedra. The official Hittite cult since Hattušili I. therefore makes the weather-god of Hatti and the sun-goddess of Arinna (Wurunšemu), who is a Hattian goddess closely connected with the earth as her prime concern, a divine couple; according to the Hurrian influence since the Middle Kingdom this pair gets identified with the Hurrian gods Tešup and Hebat. Despite these historical developments within the pantheon it can be easily seen that the older cult of a divine bull was not totally forgotten, because during a local festival at the Hattian cult centre Nerik women, e.g., sing the “song of the bull”. Other than the Hittites who lived on agriculture depending on the rain given by the weather-god the neolithic and chalcolithic society earned its living by hunting which featured other religious ideas. Judging from archaeological findings one can conclude that shamanistic practices (initiation of the hunter and shamanistic identification with the huntable animal) have not only been familiar to the neolithic people in Anatolia but texts from the Hattian cultic stratum occasionally are open to an interpretation in accordance with shamanistic rites or ideas.

So we can draw a first conclusion about “Hittite” religion which is important for the whole book: The materials from prehistory in Anatolia show traits which—partly—live on in central Anatolia till the 2nd millenium B.C.E. mainly among the Hattian population and form a substantial part of “Hittite” religion. The Hittites proper—that is the Indo-Europeans who began to settle in central Anatolia in the second half of the 3rd millenium—added little from their inherited Indo-European religion to this religious system;³ even Šiu (p. 188sq), the Indo-European god of heaven and light, whom Anitta calls “our god” and who is to be considered as one of the most genuine Indo-European gods of the Hittites very soon gets assimilated to the Hattian sun-god thus changing identity and partly losing importance. For the wider context of “Hittite” religion it is important to note that from the 16th century onwards there was a growing Hurrian and Syrian influence

bringing new ideas, gods and rites to Anatolia. So we have to consider all these materials carefully as they have been integrated in the official religion.

Bearing in mind that our available sources on Hittite religion show either a strong Hattian cultic stratum or an influx of Hurrian and Syrian traditions and beliefs one may ask what was “Hittite religion” in reality. With the intention of bringing the question to a somewhat exaggerated conclusion I would like to say that there never existed a Hittite religion for everybody. Hittite religion *sensu strictu* was a syncretistic system favoured by the state since the Old Kingdom. As such a system it reached its absolute climax under Hattušili III. and Tudhaliya IV. in the New Kingdom. “Hittite religion” in this sense was a political affair with only marginal meaning for the common people, whose religious beliefs remained primarily based on local traditions. So we have to try to differentiate between “Hittite Religion” as state religion and the religion(s) in common life when talking about a “Geschichte der hethitischen Religion”.

2. *The Gods, the King, the Festivals, and the State Cult*

“The thousand gods of Hatti” is an often used formula by the Hittites to describe the totality of their pantheon, and the given number is hardly an exaggeration. The very detailed analysis of this pantheon (or panthea) and the ideas about the gods therefore cover a large part of the reviewed book (p. 294-631). Gods are mighty beings who dominate the areas of their competence and due to their might it is possible that the hypostases that emerge from them are a factor accounting for the huge number of gods in Anatolia. In most cases they are venerated in an anthropomorphic form. So they are similar but superior to mankind, a central difference being the gods’ power over the phenomena of nature. But in their characteristics they do not differ from mankind: They fail to die, but they need food and beverages. They suffer hunger or thirst when nobody supplies them with meal-offerings. Like humans gods can be jealous, angry, revengeful, but also friendly, helpful or generous and so humans try to be on good terms with the gods via cultic means. Like humans gods too cannot be only good or only evil. Leaving many gods since the Old Kingdom beside we can state that the prime ranks in the official pantheon in that time were occupied by the sun-goddess of Arinna, her daughter Mezzulla and the weather-god (of Hatti). The weather-god is not only an instance who gives rain but for the official religion—since Pithana’s and Anitta’s rule at Kaniš—he is the

preserver of the cosmic order and gives shelter to the king. The god is the lord and possessor of the country which the king only holds in trust for the god. The sun-goddess of Arinna can be originally characterized as a mother- and earth-goddess of the Hattian cult centre Arinna; her astral aspects are combined with her chthonic aspects because the sun enters every evening the netherworld (later called the “dark earth”) to return beneath the earth to her rising point in the east. Thus a sun-goddess and an earth-goddess are not irreconcilable with each other. In the Old Kingdom Hattušili I. makes her wife of the weather-god. In that time her daughter Mezzula whose centre also was Arinna got her dominant position in the state cult, too. Male and female tutelary deities⁴ also ranked high in the Old Kingdom and most of them originated from a Hattian milieu. Some of them are clearly related to hunting which may be a hint that their origins may reach back to even earlier ages.

With the growing influence of the Hurrians some substantial changes appear: The tutelary deities face a decline of their position maybe due to the fact that such deities were not prominent in Hurrian religious thought. They did not disappear from official cults—as festival texts from the time of Tudhaliya IV. still show—but they are missing to a very large degree in prayers and they never are chosen as a personal tutelary deity from any king then. The weather-god gets identified with the Hurrian weather-god Tešup and the sun-goddess of Arinna is identified with Tešup’s wife Hebat. Hebat’s son Šarruma also takes a high position in the pantheon forming a triad with Tešup and Hebat thus replacing Mezzula from this triad of the official state-pantheon. Another notable change begins to concentrate all the official cults in the capital Hattuša since the Middle Hittite period reaching its climax in the 14th century when the priests tried to organize a uniformed pantheon for all the empire; also the efforts of Tudhaliya IV. to build a lot of temples in the upper town of Hattuša are a sign for this centralization of cults. The growing pantheon of the Hittites with their “thousand gods”⁵ shows one further facet: Foreign gods were adopted to the official pantheon due to political and territorial acquisitions. So they played a role within the state cult but never were really worshipped by the broad masses. It is clear that nearly all the gods emerged from local cult centres and the important ones faced supra-regional veneration from some time onwards. But their local importance did usually not decline so it is not surprising to find local cults till the end of the Hittite state—both according to textual and

archaeological sources (p. 539-615). From these sources it becomes clear that these cults were also integrated into the religion of the state; parts of the great festivals, e.g., take place not only at Hattuša, but the king or the queen celebrate one day or the other of the festival at another centre. One task for future research is here to be mentioned: What is the relationship between official cult and private religion in such centres? Maybe an accurate analysis of local cults (in comparison with rites performed at the capital) will shed further light on everybody's religion.

As already has been said above since the Old Kingdom the weather-god is the lord of the land and the king only administers it for the god. Therefore the king has an important position within religion (cf. p. 181-229). The king's relation to the gods was a subject of historical change thus reflecting the melting of separate Hattian and Indo-European Hittite traditions. In the central Anatolian myth of Illuyanka—also being prominent in the New Year's festival—Hupašiya maybe reflects the idea of an early king who can only rule for a limited time and is to be deposed (and killed) when he cannot guarantee the prospering of nature any more. A ritual for building a new house (or palace) stemming from the Hattian milieu lays emphasis on the fact that the Hattian throne-goddess Hanwašuit (Halmašuit) bestows the kingship and the royal insignia from the sea (that is from Zalpa located at the Black Sea) to the king at Hattuša. Besides Zalpa also Kaniš is an important royal centre and Anitta emphasizes his connection with the sun-god Šiu. At least since the Old Hittite period these traditions intertwine but I think that Haas is not absolutely right when he accentuates that from then onwards the weather-god (of heaven) was the main source of royal authority. Judging from pictures of the king wearing the dress of and showing iconographic features of the sun-god but also from textual evidence according to which the sun-god and the king operate in a similar way one has to conclude that the sun-god is at least as important for the king's authority as the weather-god during the entire Hittite history.⁶ Maybe this is some hidden inheritance from the "Hittite" sun-god Šiu. With the act of the enthronement the king is not only initiated into kingship but he also becomes the sacred ruler of the country and the highest priest for the official religious ceremonies. There are some indications that this act took place within the New Year's festival and from that moment onwards everything the king was doing he did for the welfare and blessing of the country. It must be seen from this point of view that nearly all the Hittite ritual texts at our disposal focus on the king

and the queen: The texts, e.g., deal with means to restore their ritual purity, to maintain their strength or remove sickness, or to appease the gods' anger at the royal family.

The king also has to serve as the main priest in the festivals of the state cult some of them lasting for more than one month. The Hattian *purulliya*-festival (p. 696-747) originated from the cult centre at Nerik and may reach back to pre-Hittite times. It was celebrated at the beginning of the New Year in autumn and its main purpose was to strengthen the growth of nature and the vitality and charisma of the royal couple, but also to renovate the palace thus symbolically renewing kingship. Maybe this long festival—we already have an Old Hittite text mentioning that the whole festival was laid down on a series consisting of 32 tablets—was not celebrated annually but only every seventh or ninth year. Due to political pressure from the Kaskaeans from Northern Anatolia during the Middle Hittite period it became difficult (or even impossible) to celebrate the festival at Nerik which led to changes of the festival. It got shortened, some parts of it could be passed over or were to be held at other centres. Another important festival, the AN.TAH.ŠUM-festival (p. 772-826), was celebrated in spring. Probably Suppiluliuma I. united several local spring festivals to one long festival which was held—under the patronage of the ruler—at different places which the king subsequently visited in the course of the festival days which also took a period of more than one month. Thus the king could integrate local interests and hopes in the king as a guaranty for the land's welfare in the state cult. As a spring festival—its name is derived from the plant AN.TAH.ŠUM, some kind of crocus or fennel—it certainly had to bestow prosperity of plants to the country but it was mainly celebrated for “the gods and goddesses of Hatti and the sun-goddess of Arinna” (cf. KUB XIX 22, 1-2). The *nuntarriyašha*-festival (p. 827-847) in autumn lasted—in its elaborated form—about fifty days. As in the case with the AN.TAH.ŠUM-festival this festival also seems to date at least to the time of Suppiluliuma I., who united and incorporated local autumn festivals into one ritual. Later on Muršili II., Hattušili III. and Tudhaliya IV. have added other subfestivals to the rituals and have introduced some new rites. Comparable to the AN.TAH.ŠUM-festival we again see that the king celebrates parts of the festival at different places which he visits subsequently. One central theme of the festival is harvesting because the sun-goddess of Arinna is offered “new” fruits, young wine and fresh honey by the queen.

These three festivals⁷ are connected with the seasons and the year which began originally in autumn. Haas shows that these three festivals had undergone some substantial changes which mainly concern the *purulliya*- and the AN.TAH.ŠUM-festival. The aforementioned necessity to change the *purulliya*-festival due to political and military troubles from the Kaskaean led to a decline of this festival. When Muršili II. put off the new year to spring according to the Babylonian calendar (p. 693) the AN.TAH.ŠUM-festival could serve as a New Year's festival thus replacing the older Hittite festival to a large degree. It is obvious that the rites of the 11th day of the AN.TAH.ŠUM, when the "old year" is set to rest in the temple of the dead, had their original setting within the New Year's celebration of the *purulliya*-festival and were only transferred to the spring festival of AN.TAH.ŠUM after the latter had become the New Year's festival which now was the main and annually held event. But also the *nuntarriyašša*-festival in autumn gained importance from the decline of the *purulliya*. After this had been transferred to spring, the *nuntarriyašša* was the only big autumn-festival which got more and more elaborated and adapted to the AN.TAH.ŠUM-celebrations in spring. Both festivals had the cultic journeys of the king to nearly the same cultic centres in common, the rites held from the 9th to the 11th day of the autumn festival were nearly the same as those held from the 12th to the 14th day of the festival in spring. Bearing in mind such similarities we can reach the following conclusion about Hittite festivals: They serve the state cult and political interests.⁸ Therefore it is interesting to note that the main participants of these festivals are—besides the royal family—the public officials, the representatives of the important cities of the Hittite empire and also the "foreigners" that is the international diplomatic corps being present at Hattuša. We have no information that commoners had to fulfil any important function during the festivals though it can be held for certain that they took part in them. But on a sociological level these festivals represent first of all the well organized Hittite state with the king on the hierarchical top. It is this background which can explain that Hittite festivals—described in official ritual "handbooks" which have also been copied and sent to the provincial towns to guarantee the exact performance of the rituals—lack nearly any kind of spontaneity or individuality. They are ceremonies to be carried out mirroring hierarchy: the king surrounded by his family at the inner circle and by high diplomats and officials at the outer circle. The farther away from the king the lower the status of the participant and the less important (or de facto unnecessary) was his presence.

3. "Private" Religion in Common Life

Hittite ritual (and mythological) texts focus on official religion and official cults but reading them carefully it is possible to some degree to sketch the meaning of religion for common people, too. Although we cannot describe every religious practice of these people because relevant sources are missing some aspects can be deduced from the official texts. In ancient societies man is maybe more deeply involved in religion from his birth to the grave than in modern societies. So we can first mention birth rituals which often show the divine help for mother and child. Goddesses who are requested to give help on such an occasion are at first rate Kamrušepa and Hannahanna, but also the moon-god Arma⁹ shows close connections to conception, pregnancy and birth. Although these ritual texts are at first hand concerned with births within the royal family we may argue that similar (maybe in some way shortened) rituals are performed usually at births in many households. As Ch. Zinko¹⁰ has shown recently there are some comparable traits in Hittite and old Indian birth rituals; the latter are part of the domestic rituals which should be carried out also by commoners. On the basis of such phenomenological coincidences we may assume that religious life began at the moment of birth; so Kantuzili correctly states in his well-known prayer:¹¹ "O my god, since my mother gave birth to me, you, my god, have reared me."

Daily life has its centre in the house and some important information regarding religion is presented by Haas under the heading "Hauskulte" (p. 249-293). The house is a microcosmos and private religion has always been closely connected with the domestic sphere. Therefore the building of a new house is accompanied by rituals and the last action is the setting of the hearth as the religious core of this new house. Women have to care for the fire of the hearth as symbol of the living family. When the fire is extinguished the family will die or face misfortune at least. So in mythological texts we are told that smoke seized the house and stifled the fire as a portentous sign. Therefore the whole family gathers around the hearth, offerings are given to it and the numen of the hearth is expected to provide vitality, virility and prospering to the household. It is a pity that we do not know if such rituals to the hearth have been performed regularly or only occasionally. The aforementioned Kamrušepa, whose cultic centre has been the early Hittite settlement at Kaniš and who has been identified with the Hattian goddess Katahziwuri already in the Old Kingdom,

has also a close affiliation to the fire of the hearth; a ritual text illustrates this aspect when she is the goddess who can bring the lost heat of the fire back. This corresponds with other rites within the family and the household, so that she is invoked to purify the house, the hearth, but also the domestic animals. With the Hurrian influence Šaušga takes the position of a goddess giving shelter to the family and the private¹² household like Kamrušepa and Hannahanna. Other numina of the household have—to a lesser degree—a comparable importance in daily religion, e.g., the spirits of the door, the door-bolt, the window or the central pillar of the house. These are places in the house from where danger for the house and the family can emerge and it is necessary to keep their spirits in good mood. The central pillar of the house is closely related to the main seat of the male head of the family; therefore these spirits of the house are venerated by the male members of the family. Within the family never could all the gods of the official pantheon be worshipped. We know that in the palace at Hattuša a special temple was dedicated to the private gods of the royal family and Muwatalli II. venerates the gods and goddesses of his grandmother and grandfather; from other Hittite kings we know that they have chosen one god as their special tutelary deity, e.g., Muwatalli II. the Luwian weather-god *pihaššašši*, Hattušili III. the Hurrian goddess Šaušga or Tudhaliya IV. Šarruma. We may assume that such a personal preference for certain gods did not only occur at the royal court but was also a common practice.

The *pater familias* has to care for the cult of the deceased ancestors (p. 216-248). The official cult of the (royal) dead in Anatolia can be compared with similar practices in Ebla, Alalah, Ugarit or other centres in Syria. The ancestors are regarded as divine; when the king dies, Hittite texts say “the king becomes a god” (*šiu- kišari*). In a similar way the dead in Syrian Ugarit can be said to be “gods” (*ilm*). Thus I think that Haas (p. 243) is not right in postulating that the dead Hittite king is united with the old Indo-European god of heaven Šiu. The “divinity” of the dead ancestors is an expression that they possess another status than the living so that they can provide—like the gods—blessings and welfare for the family when they are venerated in a proper way. That the dead are still considered as part of the family can be deduced from the designation of the day of the dead as the “day of (the father and) the mother”. Also worth mentioning is a

passage from a ritual for the dead when the priest asked where the dead person has gone to; he gets the following answer: "The mother [approached] him and took his hand" (KUB XXX 28 rev. 11sq). The dead one will be recollected by his own (deceased) ancestors so that these family bonds never are broken entirely. Also the type of name giving suggests this interpretation as we can observe that grandfather and grandson are bearing the same name. It is the obligation of the living head of the family, the *pater familias*, to uphold the family ties by providing the cult of the dead in his house. The Hittite text series *šalliš waštaiš* for the dead king provides evidence of rituals concerning the dead which last as long as fourteen days. But there are some other fragmentary texts¹³ with similar rituals which are not performed for the king but—obviously—for a commoner. It is interesting that one of these rituals lasts for only seven days. Another interesting feature of one of these texts shows the necessity that the husband has to care for bread and beer for his wife who has died from the "Išhara-disease". Thus we have to conclude that it was possible (and necessary) to perform (perhaps less complicated) rituals for dead commoners as part of "private" religion.

"Magic" according to Hittite texts is a system of polarities like impure-pure, sick-healthy or bound-unbound. A person who is effected in this negative way can be treated with incantations to get well again. Both (white) "magic" which aims to (re)create integrity and (black) "magic" which creates disorder are connected with the cosmic order and the gods. A good number of Hittite (and Hurrian) ritual texts can be characterized as either incantations or rituals for white magic (cf. p. 876-911) which shows its importance for Hittite society. There is no doubt that magic was fully acknowledged among the Hittites as a substantial part of official and private life, as we have already seen, e.g., in connection with the birth rituals. Any kind of mischief—sickness, sudden death, quarrel between husband and wife, crop failure or famine—results from black magic so that one has to counteract. Magic is conceived as a technique which can be taught and learned and gods are the first authorities who know how to handle magic. Mainly goddesses like Kamrušepa, Hannahanna or Šaušga are concerned with it which fosters the belief that women are chief experts¹⁴ in magic in a negative or positive way. Lengthy purification or incantation rituals can be carried out on behalf of the king but sometimes we also find in such texts the note that when the ritual is carried out on behalf of a poor man then it is shortened and

less materials are used or less fruits and aromata are offered to the gods (cf. p. 888). This is interesting because we learn from it that magic rituals had just the same meaning for the official state cult and for the private religious well-being. Such (simplified) rituals thus obviously formed a very important aspect in everyday religion. When one was in need because of mischief one could ask a ritual practitioner to intervene with his technique to appease the gods, to remove misfortune and to bring oneself in harmony with the cosmic order.

One aspect of religion that is treated only marginally in the study by Haas is the question of ethics and sin.¹⁵ Different texts lay an emphasis on the pessimistic fact that mankind is sinful and therefore the sin of the father is passed over to the son, as a famous statement given by Muršili II. in his so-called second plague prayer says. But also other kinds of mischief—e.g., the drying up and spoiling of crops, the breaking of a birth-stool—occasion because of someone's sin. Thus man has always to search his heart if he has done something wrong that displeases the gods. A text from the end of the 15th century, the prayer of Kantuzili, lists some possibilities of sins and Kantuzili is not aware of having sinned in any way. But he is suffering from sickness and therefore he must have committed some unknown sin which is the reason for his bad situation. He prays to his god:¹⁶ "Even when I fared well, I always acknowledged the superior power (and) the wisdom of my god. Never have I sworn in thy name, my god, and then broken the oath afterward. That which is holy to my god and hence not fit for me to eat, never have I eaten it. I have not brought impurity upon my body. Never have I withheld from thy stable an ox; never have I withheld from thy fold a sheep. Whenever I came upon food, I never ate it indiscriminately; whenever I came upon water, I never drank it indiscriminately. Were I now to recover, would I not have recovered at the word of thee, my god?" Other kinds of sin—e.g., theft, murder, neglecting help for the other or disregarding divine commands or festivals for the gods—cause the anger of the gods and man has to ask for pity. Repentance and atonement will reconcile man and his god(s), but material reparation can also be necessary. A man who knows his sinful behaviour and makes it good, also does a favor to Hittite society. Thus religion and ethics have not only a spiritual, but also an inner-wordly effect.

4. Conclusion

Exhaustive articles or books on Hittite Religion in dictionaries or handbooks of the History of Religions are rare. Therefore one gratefully acknowledges the new book on Hittite religion by Haas which will serve as an important reference tool to religion in Hittite Anatolia. The prime concern of Haas has been to present all the relevant source materials rather systematically (cf. p. xiii-xiv) thus paving the way to further research on religious phenomena and practices in Anatolia. Thus his “History of Hittite Religion” is rather a starting point¹⁷ than the end of our research for the “meaning” of religion in Hittite Anatolia—not only as an upper class and main stream system, but also in its every day setting. I am aware that due to our disposable sources it will remain impossible to learn everything about Hittite religion but I think some conclusions are noteworthy.

Haas has described the syncretistic religion of the Hittites with its importance for the society and the maintenance of royal power. Although the author has in view a chronological setting of his sources and the development of traditions I think it is still a task for the future to research the “history” of religion in Hittite Anatolia spanning at least half a millenium. The Old Hittite period, the important turning point of religious thoughts in Middle Hittite times and the official religion and cults of the New Hittite kingdom deserve a treatment of their own¹⁸—depending on philological research concerning the age and the time of origin of our written sources which still has to be done. Then we will learn more about changing ideas. The same can be said about ethnic diversities of Anatolia which also are reflected in different cults. Without doubt Haas has put his emphasis on this factor and has analyzed them. Being excellently acquainted with the Hurrian culture this important aspect of “Hittite” religion has been given all the necessary attention. Taking together such diachronic and ethnic traits one will have to ask, e.g., in further research: Did Hurrian concepts have an impact on Hittite common people in the capital during the 13th century or did these concepts only have an impact for the state religion? How long did the Hattian stock of population in central Anatolia follow their religion and when or how got these religious concepts changed? Could the priests (or somebody else) effectively propagate religious traditions favored at the royal court among the different social classes? Giving answers to such question is not easy. I think we will have to look first at the materials assembled by Haas mainly in chapters like “Hauskulte” or “lokale

Kulte” but also in the rich materials on the gods and goddesses. Further I think we can take the scarce informations on religion in central and southern Anatolia after the fall of the Hittite empire and before the conquest by the Assyrians as a test: Hieroglyphic-Luwian and Lycian inscriptions and archaeological remains from these periods can show us which aspects of “Hittite” religion lived further on.¹⁹ Taking this together we will be able to sketch a diversified picture of religion(s) in Hittite Anatolia—regarding its/their diachronic setting, its/their official range, its/their place in everyday life, and—maybe—its/their function as a common bond for “Hittite” culture.

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¹ V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1994 (= Handbuch der Orientalistik, 1. Abt., 15. Bd.), xxi+1031 p., 137 plates. ISBN-90-04-09799-6. US\$ 263.00.

² For problems of a seasonal pattern for the interpretation of the Baal cycle cf. M.S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Vol. I. Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary*, Leiden 1994, 63-69.

³ The study by E. Masson, *Le combat pour l'immortalité. Héritage indo-européen dans la mythologie anatolienne*, Paris 1991 is missing in the exhaustive bibliography compiled by Haas. But Masson's study is giving too much credit to Indo-European influence on Hittite religion, cf. my review of Masson's book in *BiOr* 50 (1993) 194-199.

⁴ Cf. also G. McMahon, *The Hittite State Cult of the Tutelary Deities*, Chicago 1991, 211-215.

⁵ Cf. now I. Singer, “‘The Thousand Gods of Hatti’: The Limits of an Expanding Pantheon”, in: *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994) 81-102.

⁶ Cf. Ph. Houwink ten Cate, “The Sun God of Heaven, the Assembly of Gods and the Hittite King”, in: D. van der Plas (ed.), *Effigies Dei. Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden 1987 (Supplements to Numen 51), 13-34. The interesting article is to be added at p. 996 to the bibliography by Haas.

⁷ There are a lot of other (smaller) festivals to be held for (locals) gods or in connection with the agriculturally important seasons. Detailed analyses have been given by Haas for the KILAM- (p. 748-771) and the *hišuwu*-festival (p. 848-875). The latter is a further excellent example how festivals are closely related to

Hittite politics: Puduhepa, the wife of Hattušili III. and the daughter of a priest from Kizzuwatna, entrusts Walwaziti to search for festivals from Kizzuwatna and to compile from these festivals a new ritual lasting for 9 days—the *hišuwu*-festival. Thus we can say that this festival is a foundation by Puduhepa to the weather-god on behalf of her husband's (and the state's) welfare.

⁸ Cf. Haas, p. 680: "[Festrituale] vermitteln... den Eindruck eines straff organisierten, umfassenden Staatswesens, das allein der König repräsentiert. Hierfür sprechen die stark ausgeprägte Ritualisierung des kultischen Vollzugs, die starre Einhaltung der Zeremonien, das fast völlige Fehlen ekstatischer Momente und ... jeglicher Art von Spontanität und Individualität der Festgemeinde."

⁹ The verb *armahh-* "to become pregnant" is deduced from the name of this god, cf. Haas, p. 273.

¹⁰ Ch. Zinko, "Hethitische und vedische Geburtsrituale im sprach- und kulturgeschichtlichen Vergleich—ein Arbeitsbericht", in: *SIMA* 1 (1994) 119-148; Ch. Zinko, "Hethitische Geburtsrituale im Vergleich mit altindischen Ritualen", in: O. Carruba/M. Giogieri/C. Mora (eds.), *Atti del II congresso internazionale di Hittitologia*, Pavia 1995, 389-400 (= *Studia Mediterranea* 9).

¹¹ KUB XXX 10 obv. 6; cf. G. Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals*, Wiesbaden 1983, 11.

¹² To care for the royal household is the task of Hebat, cf. Haas, p. 260.

¹³ The texts have been studied by H. Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale*, Berlin 1958, 98-103.

¹⁴ I think that Haas' statement cannot be upheld even if he gives a reference to M. Mauss (p. 882 with note 43): "Die magische Autorität der Frau beruht auf ... ihrer Eigenschaft zur Hysterie, so daß ihre nervösen Krisen sie übernatürlichen Kräften auszuliefern scheinen."

¹⁵ Detailed references for the following short notes are given in M. Hutter, "Sündenbewußtsein als Spiegel ethischer Werte im hethitischen Kleinasien," in: H. Bürkle (ed.), *Grundwerte menschlichen Verhaltens in den Religionen*, Frankfurt 1993, 9-17.

¹⁶ Cited after A. Goetze, "Hittite Prayers," in: J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton 1969, 393-401, 400.

¹⁷ Cf. also the review of the book by M. Popko in *OLZ* 90 (1995) 469-483 which was published just when I finished this article.

¹⁸ I only partially agree with Haas, p. 699: "Der Versuch, getrennte—alt-, mittel- und jung-hethitische—Fassungen zu rekonstruieren, würde schon daran scheitern, daß jung-hethitischen Ritualtafeln zumeist ältere Vorlagen zugrundeliegen." What Haas says here concerning the *purulliya*-festival is also valid for other rituals. But for a "history" we have to try to reconstruct even if we cannot reach satisfactory results in any case.

¹⁹ Cf. M. Hutter, "Das Ineinanderfließen von luwischen und aramäischen religiösen Vorstellungen in Nordsyrien," in: P.W. Haider / M. Hutter / S. Kreuzer (eds.), *Religionsgeschichte Syriens von der Frühzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart 1996, 116-122; M.N. van Loon, *Anatolia in the Earlier First Millenium B.C.*, Leiden 1991 (= Iconography of Religions XV/13).

BOOK REVIEWS

GERDIEN JONKER, *The Topography of Remembrance. The Dead, Tradition and Collective Memory in Mesopotamia* (Studies in the History of Religions. NUMEN book series, 68)—Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill 1995 (284 p.) ISBN 90-04-10162-4 (cloth) US\$ 98.25.

During the 1st millennium BCE, a new form of historical consciousness seems to have arisen in various parts of the ancient world. Traditional societies normally relate to the past in terms of continuity. In these centuries, however, a sense of discontinuity arose that related to a distant and 'normative' past across a gap of forgetfulness or "dark age". In Greece, the Homeric epics codified memories of the Mycenaean culture, bridging a gap of some 500 years. In Israel, the stories about the Exodus from Egypt, reaching back to about the same time period as the Trojan war, became codified in a similarly normative form. In both cases, different societies such as aristocratic Greece and theocratic Israel looked back to the Late Bronze Age as an Heroic Age and as the foundation of their identity. In Egypt, a different but comparable intensification of memory can be observed with the "renaissance" starting in the 25th dynasty (end of 8th century BCE). In this case, written records reached back to the beginning of the 3rd millennium; there was no specific period to be singled out as "normative", but a certain prominence seems to have been given to the age of the pyramids and to the Middle Kingdom. Mesopotamia is a particularly interesting case in point. Here, the memory reaches as far back as in Egypt, to the 3rd mill. BC, but quite obviously a specific period is singled out as absolutely normative: the dynasty of Akkad (2334-2154) and especially king Sargon I (2334-2279).

There are many ways in which societies remember and their capability of persisting through the ages seems closely related to, or even dependent on these ways of remembering. According to the picture Gerdien Jonker draws of Mesopotamian cultural memory, there has scarcely ever been a society that invested greater efforts in this kind of memory and that was able to overcome heavier crises and even collapses than Ancient Mesopotamia. Mesopotamian culture survived the disappearance of the Sumerians, the invasion of the Gutians and the fall of the Sargonid Empire, the invasion of

the Amorites, the fall of the Neo-Sumerian kingdom, the Kassites, the Assyrians, the Suteans, the Persians, and the Greeks. Sumerian texts were still read and copied in the Hellenistic era. Cuneiform culture assumed a state of fixity that not only bestowed a tremendous cultural continuity on a sequence of various peoples living and ruling in Mesopotamia, it even allowed outsiders such as the Hurrians, the Hittites and the Canaanites to “opt in” and to adopt for themselves the same cultural tradition.

Following the theories of Maurice Halbwachs (who, by the way, was not a Jew [p. 21] and was murdered by the Nazis in consequence of his son’s engagement in the French resistance), Gerdien Jonker subscribes to a constructivist or “dynamic” conception of memory that sees in memory not a static repository, but a dynamism of construction and reinvention of the past according to the needs and ‘frames’ of the present.

There are three factors which seem to be of particular importance for Babylonian ways of remembering:

1. the strong conviction that everything that happens including what we call “history” is the direct expression of the will of the gods, and that only the careful collection and study of what happened provides the necessary orientation in time and space (a variant of the principle ‘*historia magistra vitae*’);

2. the desire to live on in social memory, a “sense of immortality” based on remembering and belonging;

3. the belief in the power of writing to reach distant posterity and to bestow immortality at least to the “name”.

Factors 2 and 3 (which were shared by the ancient Egyptians) were operative in the custom of erecting stelae (*narû*) in which kings addressed their posterity; factor 1 (which was alien to the Egyptians) was responsible for the careful copying, collecting, studying and imitating of these messages in later times. In Mesopotamia, the stela seems to have paved the way to literature and its specific forms of literary communication much in the same way as the tomb in ancient Egypt.¹ Even the Gilgamesh epic is couched in the form of a stela inscription: “All his toil he engraved on a *narû*”. Both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia, there is a transition from “monumental” to “literary discourse”. In Mesopotamia this transition involves a kind of secularization. Here, monumental inscriptions typically address deities, whereas literary texts address human readers. The space of memory in which a person wants to place himself in order to gain immortality is first the temple

where one is safely preserved in divine memory and only later literature, that is, the “*edubba*”, the house of tablets as the institution of literary tradition. This shift from cult to copy, or from “ritual” to “textual coherence”² is achieved in Mesopotamia as early as the 21st and 20th century BC.

The codification of the Sargonid memory starts already immediately after the breakdown of the Sargonid empire and is inseparably connected with this transition from oral to written transmission and from monument to literature. The birth of literature and the construction of a normative past (the “Akkad orientation”) co-evolve at the turn of the century and seem both connected to a political re-orientation. In Egypt, the birth of literature coincides much in the same way (and in the same time) with the re-establishment of central kingship after a period of dissolution.³ Jonker demonstrates that the Babylonians were not interested in the past as such but only in those kings who contributed to the project of political unification. The historical tradition about Sargon was turned into myth in order to function as a “*mythomoteur*”⁴ in the formation of a centralized state. The legend of Sargon became the Babylonian “myth of the state”⁵ and the report of his campaigns determined the “mental map” of the Assyrians and Babylonians down to the middle of the first millennium.

In Iron Age Babylonia, the recourse to a normative past reached back in history, not to a period some 500 years earlier as in Greece and in Israel, but to a period 1500 years earlier. This singular mnemonic achievement finds its explanation by the fact that it is already informed by a long tradition of “Akkad orientation”, of looking back to Sargon and his time as the normative past. Nothing of this sort applies to Greece or Israel; and even Egypt which has a similarly long memory lacks the idea of a normative past. The Old Babylonians quest for a normative past could rely on various sources: (1) The “*cadre matériel*”, a term coined by Halbwachs and used here to comprise ruins, monuments, canals, roads and other remains of the Sargonid time which were still massively around some 300 years later; (2) the *narû* tradition; (3) the letters of the kings of the third dynasty of Ur which were translated (from Sumerian into Akkadian) and anthologized by Babylonian scribes because they referred to the early history of the ruling dynasty, the Amorites; (4) the *omina* tradition (*Omina* were collected and studied in order to find out the will of the gods as manifested both in the liver of the sacrificial sheep and in the historical events); (5) the king-list tradition. Systematizing and codifying a long oral tradition, the king-lists were composed in the Old Babylonian period in order to provide the Amorite state

of Isin with a continuous past stretching back over a period of 28,000 years to the flood. These and other ways of access to the Sargonid period were used in order to form a tradition that became the "Great tradition" of Babylonia. The centralization of power characteristic of the Old Babylonian state was mirrored by the centralization of tradition, that is, by canonization.

In the 1st mill. the situation was different because the cadre matériel had almost disappeared. The normative past had turned into a purely literary phenomenon not to be corroborated by visible traces. The traces which were no longer visible had to be excavated. Babylonian society became a "digging community" (Jonker, p. 175) seeking to locate its memories much in the same way as Halbwachs had described this principle in his book *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte* (1941) for Early Christianity. Excavating and collecting the traces, reading and following the messages, and keeping alive the memory of the past were the means by which the Assyrians and the Babylonians of the Iron Age managed to relate to and to continue the civilization of the third millennium BC.

Gerdien Jonker devotes a fascinating book to a fascinating phenomenon. No student of "cultural memory" could wish for a more pertinent material. The author is to be congratulated for having discovered this treasure and she is to be thanked for having it made accessible to others in such a well structured, comprehensive and eminently readable form.

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¹ Cf. my article "Schrift, Tod und Identität. Das Grab als Vorschule der Literatur im alten Ägypten", in: A. and J. Assmann, C. Hardmeier (eds.), *Schrift und Gedächtnis. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation I*. München 1983, 64-93.

² Cf. my *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich 1992, chapter 2.1.

³ Cf. G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la xii.e dynastie*, Paris 1956.

⁴ Cf. A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford 1986.

⁵ Cf. Harald Biezais (ed.), *The Myth of the State*, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis VI, Stockholm 1972.

FRIEDERIKE FLESS, *Opferdiener und Kultmusiker auf stadtrömischen historischen Reliefs. Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie, Funktion und Bedeutung*—Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern 1995 (123 p. + 46 plates) ISBN 3-8053-1601-1 (cloth) DM 148.00.

The limited scope of the book is precisely indicated by its title: it deals with the subordinated personnel of sacrificial or processional scenes of reliefs stemming from the city of Rome. These lower ranks of Rome's religious system have been equally neglected by archaeology, history, and *Religionswissenschaft*. Thus, the detailed description, typologizing, and classification on the basis of terms given by literary sources is an important undertaking. The strength of F.'s book is in the attempt at differentiating the large numbers of figures indiscriminately termed *ministri*, *camilli* or *victimarii*. Mostly drawing on known texts and well-published material, F. combines a close reading of the antiquarian sources with iconographical and/or functional differences in the reliefs, thereby identifying *praecones* demanding silence, *monitores* preformulating prayers for the sacrificers, freeborn boys and girls *patrimi matrimi*, perhaps one *camillus*, and several categories of slaves. Her paralleling of the beautiful, long-haired cult servants with the so-called servile *pueri delicati* is tempting, though quite hypothetical. The treatment of the candelabrum and its handling did not convince me.

F. demonstrates how a complex ritual consisting of many stages is condensed into an image that concentrates on the preliminary sacrifice of the leading sacrificer—it is not the killing scene, performed by the butcher (*popa*) and at least two assisting *victimarii*, that is central. The critical discussion of some details of the ritual is useful, although not always conclusive (did the flute player continue to cover the killing act, too?). Realistic details—rods, ropes, a ring in the bull's nose to draw down its neck—are shown to defy the idea of the victim's voluntariness as formulated by certain types of theological literature.

Offering a handy collection of important reliefs, the general information provided by F. is restricted to the manuals' data. No attempt at any deeper analysis of the religious or social function of the sophisticated division of labour is made. Neither has the religious function of the reliefs themselves been discussed. For such questions, a comparison with the iconography of so-called "oriental" cults would have been more fruitful than the—finally negative—discussion of the influence of Greek types of some functionaries. Some more interest in the non-archaeological aspects of their objects is

necessary for archaeologists to give to non-archaeologists the answers that only archaeologists are trained to give.

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ANDREW WEEKS, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein. A Literary and Intellectual History*—Albany: State University of New York Press 1993 (283 p.) ISBN 0-7914-1420-5 (pbk.) \$18.95.

The study of Weeks addresses mysticism as a German literary phenomenon. In interpreting mystical literature we have to choose between two models. One can assume that the mystic is moved by an ineffable experience or one can approach mysticism from the perspective of a reflective tradition. Weeks is in favor of the second option (p. 3). To avoid confusion he discards the criterion of experience altogether. His point of departure is not a universal, ineffable experience beyond literature, but rather the literature of German mysticism.

In nine chapters the author identifies elements of German mysticism. Its structure revolves around the *world*, not the word. Though outstanding German mystics represent different types: Hildegard of Bingen the visionary, Meister Eckhart the reflective and Jacob Boehme the nature mystic, all German mystics assume a similar belief: that the created world is to its creator as an utterance to its speaker (p. 17). Hildegard of Bingen (11th century AD) argued that God has created all things visible and temporal with the aim to reveal by them things invisible and eternal (p. 48). Meister Eckhart focussed on the paradox of *totus intus, totus foris* (p. 74). In each soul the divine spark can be recognized, in each creature God himself (p. 81). Beginning with Cusanus and continuing from the fifteenth through the seventeenth century there is a growing tendency to replace the reflective mysticism by a nature mysticism (p. 116). Weeks traces this change by examining two themes: "Nature and Scripture. Mysticism between Renaissance and Reformation" (chap. 5) and "Letter and Spirit. Mysticism as Dissent in the German Ref-

ormation" (chap. 6). He analyzes how both themes were combined in a synthesis, the baroque synthesis. Nature, Scripture and the human creature are parallel texts in which God is revealed (p. 197). By contemplating nature man is able to grasp transcendent wisdom. Pietism and Enlightenment took over this synthesis and transformed it into a new triad, that of nature, meaning and perception. When in the 19th century German intellectuals turned in their reaction against rationalism again to mysticism the old themes of the inner and the outer, the visible and the invisible, the finite and the infinite realms appeared again. "What is outer is what is inner; raised to the condition of a secret. (Perhaps also vice versa)" (Novalis) (p. 222). Mysticism is a mode of consciousness, a universal religion (p. 226). The book ends with "Wittgenstein and the Aftermath of German Mysticism". If a broader characteristic of mysticism is its challenge to a common understanding of the world we better understand philosophical positions of German philosophers as e.g. L. Wittgenstein. The book is a valuable analysis of a German cultural tradition that has shaped the understanding of religions in Germany.

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KLAUS K. KLOSTERMAIER, *A Survey of Hinduism* (2nd edition)—Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994, XIII + 715 p., ISBN 0-7914-2109-0 (cloth) \$59.50; ISBN 0-7914-2110-4 (pbk.) \$19.95.

Klostermaier's *A Survey of Hinduism* is the most thorough introduction to Hinduism as a living religion available in English. It covers in an impressive manner most aspects of Hinduism past and present. The most important change in this second edition (first edition published 1988) is the addition of two new chapters. The chapter on *stridharma* covers topics such as the status of women in Vedic religion, *dharmaśāstras* and *bhakti*; Hindu goddesses, women poet-saints and gurus; *satī* and Indian feminism, and reflects the increased interest of scholarship in the religiosity of women and the place of women in the structure of religion. The second new chapter, on Mahātmā Gandhi, analyses his career, the forces that influenced him and his impact

on modern Hinduism, and the chapter compares well with the succeeding chapter on Hindu Nationalist Politics by revealing a contrasting version of Rāma Rājya. The approach of the book is characterized by the ambition to deal with Hinduism as “a whole, comprehensively and topically, philosophically and sociologically” (p. 9), and to “describe Hinduism as a living tradition of the Hindus” in such a way that both “contemporary Hindus will recognize themselves” (p. 3) and outsiders will be assisted in their understanding of the Hinduism “they will encounter on a visit to India” (p. 3). To satisfy everyone is impossible but this attempt to balance the views of contemporary research with the Hindu views is stimulating reading. No doubt, Klostermaier favors, to a great degree, the view of contemporary Hindus, because as he states, India is, both when applying traditional and modern methods, “once more the leading country in Indian studies” (p. 24). Some will question a few of the revisions suggested by Klostermaier, such as the theory that the Indus civilization was Vedic-Indian (p. 38), thus pushing back the presence of Vedic religion in India several thousand years, a view which also harmonizes with recent Hindu political nationalism. The suggestion of a pre-Vedic matriarchy in South India (p. 364) seems questionable, at least to this reviewer. Another objection might be raised against the way the -ism approach tends to isolate religions. The geographical area of South Asia has always been characterized by religious pluralism, so telling the history of only one of the South Asia religions might give a false impression of a continuous hegemony in India of Hinduism going back to the Vedic civilization. The changing power relations of the religions that have flourished in South Asia and their strong mutual influence can easily be lost in the -ism approach. The book gives, however, many examples of Jain and Buddhist influences on Hinduism and the political power associated with these religions in South Asian history. Although the book is a survey, no specialist in Hinduism will read this book without learning something new. The book is especially valuable for students and is recommended also to those who do not consider Hinduism their field of specialization, but still want to make use of it in their comparisons.

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MARIA DOROTHEA REIS-HABITO, *Die Dhāraṇī des Großen Erbarmens des Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara mit tausend Händen und Augen. Übersetzung und Untersuchung ihrer textlichen Grundlage sowie Erforschung ihres Kultes in China* (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series, 27)—
 Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1993 (466 p., including bibliography and index, with Chinese texts appended) ISBN 3-8050-0296-3 (pbk.) DM 50.00.

Some years ago Michel Strickmann remarked “that no Chinese Buddhist works are in greater need of study than [...] the dhāraṇī-sūtras, or books of spells and incantations”.¹ In fact, dhāraṇī-sūtras haven been largely neglected in studies of Chinese Buddhism, which may be due to the fact that they do not seem to contribute much to the understanding of Buddhist philosophy or to the historical development of Chinese Buddhism. They are not works intended to promote theoretical or historical knowledge but texts used in rituals to secure the supernatural power of the Buddhist *dharma*. This is effected through the recitation of ritual formulas, the *dhāraṇīs*, that contain the “magical”, i.e. efficacious essence of the scripture. The recitation of the *dhāraṇī* is an act not only of infinite merit, but it induces the helping powers of the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas invoked in the ritual.

The book of Maria Dorothea Reis-Habito is a comprehensive study of one of the most influential *dhāraṇīs* of the Buddhist tradition in East Asia. It is contained in the *Ch'ien-shou ch'ien-yen Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa kuang-ta yüan-man wu-ai ta-pei-hsin t'o-lo-ni ching*² (*Sūtra of the vast, complete and unrestricted dhāraṇī of the great compassionate mind of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with thousands hands and thousands eyes*, abbr. *Ch'ien-shou ching*), a scripture translated into Chinese by Bhagavaddharma in the seventh century. As the title suggests, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (chin. Kuan-yin) is the central figure in this sūtra, which till the present day is widely used in China, Japan and Korea. Accordingly, the first chapter of the study deals with the development of the ideas and beliefs concerning this important bodhisattva. The second chapter is a study of the history of the *Ch'ien-shou ching*, its various translations into Chinese and its relation to other texts. A complete translation of the scripture is provided in chapter three. The fourth chapter treats the beliefs and practices connected with the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion*. A facsimile of the Chinese texts of the sūtra and other sources is appended.

Large parts of the book are rather technical, which is not astonishing given the fact that it is pioneering a subject almost unknown to the general

reader. The author makes good use of a great number and variety of Chinese and Japanese sources. Nevertheless, the book is not just a technical study of some remote corners of Chinese Buddhism but it opens new insights into the beliefs and practices of everyday Buddhism in East Asia. The fourth chapter is particularly enlightening in this regard as it shows that the use of *dhāraṇīs* is far from being restricted to the so-called esoteric forms of Buddhism. Rather the practice was common among monks, nuns and laity of all schools. It should also be noted that the author does not confine herself to a mere historical perspective but extends her investigation to the present century. The belief in the helping power of Avalokiteśvara and the recitation of *dhāraṇīs* still are central elements in Chinese Buddhism. The author traces them in a variety of religious contexts, from popular miracle stories to rituals of penitence and the salvation of the denizens of the hells. Her book is a significant contribution to our understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a complex texture of written traditions, ritual practices, popular devotion and sophisticated philosophy.

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¹ Michel Strickmann: "The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist book of spells", in: Robert E. Buswell (ed.): *Chinese Buddhist apocrypha*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1990, 75-118: 80.

² For some reason the romanized title of the scripture given in the book omits *ta-pei-hsin* ("great compassionate mind"), cf. p. 18 and index.

RECENT STUDIES ON RELIGIONS IN AFRICA

JACOB K. OLUPONA and SULAYMAN S. NYANG (Eds), *Religious plurality in Africa; essays in honour of John S. Mbiti*—Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993, XXII + 455 p., bibliography, indices, frontispiece, hard cover, ISBN 3-11-012220-0, DM 228.00, (= Religion and Society, 32).

DAVID M. ANDERSON and DOUGLAS H. JOHNSON (Eds), *Revealing prophets: prophecy in Eastern African history*—London: James Currey; Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers; Kampala: Fountain Publishers; Athens (Ohio): Ohio University Press, 1995, X + 310 p., maps, bibliography, index; cloth, ISBN 0-85255-718-3, £35.00; paper, ISBN 0-85255-717-5, £12.95; (= Eastern African Studies).

HOLGER BERNT HANSEN and MICHAEL TWADDLE (Eds.), *Religion & politics in East Africa: the period since independence*—London: James Currey; Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers; Kampala: Fountain Publishers; Athens (Ohio): Ohio University Press, 1995, X + 278 p., map, index; cloth, ISBN 0-85255-385-4, £35.00; paper, ISBN 0-85255-384-6, £12.95; (= Eastern African Studies).

The sub-title of *Religious plurality in Africa* indicates the contents of the book much more accurately than its main title. This beautifully produced book is a collection of essays in honour of John Mbiti, pioneer in the theological study of African traditional studies for the purpose of developing an African theology. Its 21 articles deal mainly with the study of African traditional religions by Christian theologians, African theology, Christianity in Africa, or are responses to Mbiti's work. The main title is substantiated by only four articles: Nyang's on Islamic revivalism in West Africa (231-272), von Sicard's on Christian-Muslim relations in Africa (273-283), Oosthuizen's on Indian religions in Africa (283-310), and Werblowsky's on Judaism in Africa (311-316). The book is, therefore, mainly of interest to African Christian theologians. Most of them, however, will have little chance of reading it, for it is so exorbitantly expensive that no university library in the weak currency nations of Africa will be able to buy it, let alone a university lecturer or student. To other scholars of the religions of Africa, however, this book is of limited interest only, with the exception of David Westerlund's methodological analysis of the study of African traditional religions by "outsiders" and "insiders" (43-66), the contributions of Nyang and Oosthuizen, and the bio-bibliography of Mbiti (1-9, 397-415).

Revealing prophets is a collection of eleven essays in historical anthropology which examine the shifting shapes of prophecy and prophets in traditional societies in Sudan, Central African Republic, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. They deal with the fluid nature of prophecy in pre-colonial and colonial times, except for the eleventh one which studies it in colonial and

post-colonial times. They examine it for three closely related purposes. The first is the historical nature of prophecy in Africa: with the lapse of time and its concomitant social, political and other changes, the practice, perception and explanation of prophecy by believers may alter significantly. The present may not only forge new perceptions and validations of past prophets and their prophecies, to serve as precepts for the future; it may also create prophets in the past where that past had none, or alter the institution "prophecy" itself fundamentally. The second purpose is to correct the confusion in the terminology of anthropologists by paying close attention to the variation in the "internal" (or *emic*) definition processes, past and present, of "prophet" and "prophecy" in these parts of Africa, and to their relations to the definitions by the believers of a whole range of closely related categories, such as seers, diviners, spirit mediums, oracles, healers, etc. The editors point to a root cause of the imprecision of the concepts "prophet" and "prophecy": they acquired contradictory meanings in their long history of shifting shapes from the pre- to post-exilic Jewish societies, in the Greek and Hellenistic ones, and in early Christianity and early Islam. The third purpose is "to move away from the oversimplified [Weberian] notion that connects prophets only with crises" (24-25). This book is of interest, therefore, not only to students of the history of the religions of Africa, but also to students of the history of the complex and confusing concepts which we use in the description and comparison of religions and religious phenomena. It is, however, deplored that this collection has no contributions by scholars posted in African universities. Is Africa still merely object, and not subject, of the study of religions?

Religion & politics in East Africa is a collective volume on the political role of Christianity and Islam, in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan since 1960. Part I deals with "the challenge of Islam". François Constantin studies the attempts to develop Muslim national organisations in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya in the post-colonial era, by Muslims to serve the interests of their religion, and by these states to control the Muslims as a political constituency (9-31); Rex O'Fahey analyses the restoration of the *sharia* in war-torn Sudan (32-44); and Omari H. Kokole studies the role of "the Nubians"—descendants of the Muslim mercenaries in Turkish-Egyptian and British colonial armies—as one of Idi Amin's power bases between 1971 and 1979 (45-55). Part II is devoted to Uganda. Heike Behrend first describes the millenarian revolutionary Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena among the Acholi which raised an armed revolt against Museveni between 1986

and 1989 (59-71), after which Keith Ward (72-105), John Mary Waliggo (106-119) and Ronald Kassimir (120-140) analyze the political role of the two great "folk" churches of Uganda, the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches, since independence in 1962. In Part III, the roles of the Christian churches and of the Muslim community as surrogate political opposition parties in the one-party state of Kenya after Kenyatta's death in 1978, when Daniel Arap Moi came to power, are analyzed by David Throup (143-176), G.P. Benson (177-199), and Donald Cruise O'Brien (200-219). Part IV has again a regional scope: A.B.K. Kasoki examines the strained relationships between Christians and Muslim in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in colonial and post-colonial times, each being involved in not only the competition between two missionary religions, but also between the two distinct cultural, political, economical, and racial systems with which they were inextricably allied. Kasoki also examines the measure of success each had in imposing its imprint upon those societies (223-246). Marie-Louise Pirouet examines the role of the Christian mainline churches in the defense of human rights in Kenya and Uganda since independence (247-259). And finally, Martin Doornbos analyses the internal contradictions in these churches in their dual roles as missionary and developmental organisations (260-270). As is apparent from this summary, this book is of interest to several categories of students of religions in East Africa.

The "Eastern African Studies" Series has two important virtues: its volumes may be bought at an affordable price in rich nations with strong currencies; more importantly, they are published by a consortium of British, American, and East African publishers, and may, hopefully, be bought also in the nations with weak currencies and a severe book famine at affordable prices.

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Brian K. Smith, Re-envisioning Hinduism and Evaluating the Hindutva Movement

Mark Juergensmeyer, The Debate over Hindutva

Ninian Smart, Response to Brian K. Smith: Re-envisioning Hinduism

David Chidester, Anchoring Religion in the World: A Southern African History of Comparative Religion

Hugh B. Urban, Zorba The Buddha: Capitalism, Charisma and the Cult of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

Paul C. Johnson, Notes (and Questions) on Participant Observation from Urban Brazil

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- Melissa Raphael*, Truth in Flux: Goddess Feminism as a Late Modern Religion
Timothy Fitzgerald, Religion, Philosophy and Family Resemblances
Robin Rinehart, From Sanātana Dharma to Secularism: Hindu Identity in the Thought of Swami Rama Tirtha and the Swami Rama Tirtha Mission
D. Keith Naylor, The Black Presence at the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893
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- Jörg Rüpke*, Zeitliche Strukturen religiöser Aktivitäten: Historische und gegenwärtige Perspektiven
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E · J · B R I L L

THE SUN AND THE THRONE.
THE ORIGINS OF THE ROYAL DESCENT MYTH
IN ANCIENT JAPAN

RUSSELL KIRKLAND

Summary

In this study, I seek to elucidate the process by which the Japanese royal descent myth evolved into the form with which the modern world is familiar. I analyze and compare the forms of the myth found in the *Nihongi* and the *Kojiki*, and explicate their evolution through historical and textual analysis. By examining the interplay of the internal dynamics of the myth itself and the external factors that worked to shape it, I reconstruct the mythographical process, and suggest key factors that may have molded the myth. In particular, I argue that it was the introduction of Buddhism at the Yamato court that stimulated the establishment of an imperial cult at Ise and the reconfiguration of key mythic traditions. According to my analysis, the myth itself originated during the reign of king Keitai (early 6th century). In the original myth, the ancestor of the ruling house was not the sun-goddess Amaterasu, but rather the heavenly ruler Takami-musubi. In the mid-sixth century, a sun-goddess named Ō-hirume was introduced in an effort to combat the rising influence of Buddhism. The artificial figure of Amaterasu was introduced only during the reign of Temmu, late in the seventh century.

It is widely known that Japanese tradition honors the emperor of Japan as the descendant of the sun-goddess Amaterasu. That tradition of the imperial “sun-lineage” (*hi-tsugi*) articulated in the *Jinnō shōtōki* of Kitabatake Chikafusa (1339 CE), holds that the goddess installed her grandson as the first ruler of Japan, and that his descendants have ruled in unbroken succession down to the present.¹ The origins of that tradition, however, have received surprisingly little attention in the West. For the most part, those who have addressed the matter—in Japan and in the West alike—have linked it to arguments over the origins of the Japanese ruling house itself. Various theories of those origins have been proposed, none of which seem to withstand rigorous analysis.² Instead of entering into such arguments here, I

shall set aside the preconception that the origins of the descent myth are inextricably bound to the origins of the ruling house. I propose that the development of the myth may be explained satisfactorily by reference to the political and religious conditions prevailing in Yamato Japan during the sixth and seventh centuries CE.

According to the earliest Japanese “mythohistories”—the eighth-century *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*—the origins of the empire date back to 660 BCE, a date simply calculated from a cyclical formula introduced from China during the fifth or sixth century CE.³ Such traditions notwithstanding, none of the persons or events mentioned in the *Nihongi* or the *Kojiki* can be firmly established in historical terms until the sixth century, when Keitai (r. 507-534 CE) came to power in Yamato. Then, after a prolonged succession struggle, Kimmei (r. 540-572) began to consolidate the power of the Yamato throne, and by the seventh century a centralized state was well established. Nonetheless, it was not until the end of the seventh century that direct succession through the senior male line was legally instituted as the rule for the imperial lineage. Furthermore, it was not until the late seventh century that the well-known identification of the emperor as a “manifest deity” (*akitsu-kami*) is attested. Hence it stands to reason that an examination of the records concerning the sixth and seventh centuries will yield valuable insights into the evolution of the traditions that legitimated the divine status of the emperors.

The “Sun-Lineage”

There is certainly evidence that the concept of the “sun-lineage” as the foundation of royal authority originated in the Yamato period. For instance, the *Kojiki* contains songs in which legendary or semi-legendary rulers are styled *hi-no-miko*, which has traditionally been interpreted to mean “Child of the Sun.”⁴ In addition, one of the sources of the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*—the *Teiki*—was sometimes called the *Sumera-mikoto no hi-tsugi*, “the Sun-lineage of the Emperors.”⁵ Such references seem to reflect an ancient association between the ruler and the sun. It has thus generally been assumed that, even in

highest antiquity, the Yamato rulers were believed to have descended from the sun goddess, Amaterasu.

But in reality, it is by no means certain that the concept of the “sun-lineage” existed during the earlier part of the Yamato period. For one thing, many scholars now agree that in earliest times the term *hi* was not a reference to the sun, but rather a more general word for spiritual efficacy (represented by the Chinese character *ling*); thus, the term *hi-no-miko* really meant “prince/princess endowed with spiritual power.”⁶ Moreover, the myth of the kings’ descent from Amaterasu appears for the first time in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, i.e., just after the turn of the eighth century CE, and it is not immediately clear how much earlier the myth may have actually taken form. We can only be certain that there could have been no myth of direct descent until at least the sixth century, since it was only then that the Yamato throne came to be monopolized by a single line.⁷

If we pass from matters of state in Yamato to the traditions of early Japanese society as a whole, we encounter a fascinating fact: *many* clans in early Japan traced their ancestry to divine figures, especially to figures who were believed to have descended from heaven. A number of such figures are recorded, for instance, in the *Izumo Fudoki*.⁸ Confirmation of the phenomenon is found in the decree of a fifth-century Yamato ruler, as recorded in the *Nihongi*:

All of the court ministers and officials and the governors of all the provinces without exception proclaim themselves either to be the progeny of [earlier] kings or to have descended miraculously from heaven.⁹

If the Yamato rulers of that period truly regarded themselves as the descendants of Amaterasu, one might suppose that they would have tried to suppress other clans’ claims of heavenly descent as a menace to their authority. But such is clearly not the case, as can be seen from an intriguing episode in the *Nihongi*. As the legendary emperor Jimmu led his eastward expedition, he encountered opposition. One local leader sent Jimmu a message, justifying his opposition to Jimmu’s rule by claiming to serve *another* descendant of heavenly deities:

'There was once a son of the heavenly deity (*or* deities) who sailed forth in a heavenly vessel of stone, and descended from heaven to alight here. He was named Kushitama Nigihayahi no mikoto. . . Could it be that there are two sons of the heavenly deity?'

One might expect the emperor Jimmu—depicted in the mythohistories as the descendant of Amaterasu and founder of the Japanese state—to have denied the divine status of Nigihayahi, thereby eliminating the opponent's justification for opposing Yamato sovereignty. But in fact, he did precisely the opposite; he *confirmed the legitimacy of Nigihayahi's divine ancestry*: "In reality, the sons of the heavenly deity are numerous," Jimmu declared, and he acknowledged as genuine the articles that were presented to authenticate the status of Nigihayahi.¹⁰ Since Nigihayahi was the reputed ancestor of a number of eminent clans, the impact of this episode was to provide official sanction for their claim to have descended from "the heavenly deity" (*ama-tsu-kami*, a generic term).

Could it have been that the Yamato ruling clan was originally only one of a number of important clans that claimed heavenly descent? If so, should we conclude that when the Yamato government began to gain dominance during the fifth century it began to suppress rival claims so that it could build its own ancestral tradition into a political legitimation system? Or does it make more sense to conclude that a Yamato ancestral tradition only emerged in the *sixth* century, after the principle of a single line of succession was established? In order to answer these questions, I shall survey the early texts relating to the myth itself.

The Myths of the Descent of the Heavenly Grandson

The central myth pertaining to the royal house is called "The Descent of the Heavenly Grandson" (*tenson-kōrin*). One might expect that a myth of such later importance to the ruling house would have undergone a process of standardization, that the Yamato chronicles would present a single, codified version of the tale. But in fact, they actually present *two* major versions of the story, as well as a number

of variant accounts of each version. This fact has profound historical implications, as we shall see.

One major version of the tale is found in the main text of the *Nihongi*, and in several variants therein. It relates that Amaterasu had a son, Oshihomimi, who married the daughter of the great heavenly god Takami-musubi. That pair then had a son named Hononinigi. Takami-musubi desired to establish his grandson as the lord of the earthly world, so he dispatched several deities to clear the way by conciliating the indigenous earth deities. He then cloaked Hononinigi in a coverlet from his “true couch” or throne, and sent him down.¹¹

The other primary version of the *tenson-kōrin* story is found in the *Kojiki*, and in several other variants in the *Nihongi*. According to this version, Amaterasu (not Takami-musubi) originally intended to commission her son Oshihomimi to rule the earth. But when she sent down envoys to prepare the way for him, they were too slow in their duties, and in the interim the grandson, Hononinigi, was born. Oshihomimi persuaded his mother to send the child to earth in his place.¹² A variant of the account (from the *Nihongi*) apparently has Oshihomimi himself at first descend to earth; then, when the grandchild is born, Oshihomimi is recalled to heaven so that Hononinigi might rule.¹³

The differences between the two primary versions are immediately evident. The most striking discrepancy lies in the identity of the central character. In the second version, it is Amaterasu who plays the central role, but in the first version, her role is quite negligible: it is Takami-musubi who is the heavenly ruler, and Hononinigi is *his* grandson. The notice that Takami-musubi cloaks the youth with a coverlet from his throne indicates that Hononinigi was cloaked with the authority of the king of heaven. These are facts of great consequence, for Takami-musubi here plays the role that modern readers would expect Amaterasu to play.

What is the explanation of these discrepancies? The most logical explanation is that Amaterasu was not an original element in the myth. If she *had* been the original protagonist, it would be difficult to understand the diminution of her role in subsequent versions of

the myth. After all, if the *hi-tsugi* ideology had really been present since earliest times, it would have been in the interest of the Yamato rulers to magnify the figure of Amaterasu. It is conceivable that at some point there were parties who had motives to expunge the sun-goddess and insert another figure in her place.¹⁴ But in the early eighth century, when the texts in question were compiled, the royal authority was extremely strong indeed. Moreover, the *tenson-kōrin* myth was the basis of the entire “sun-lineage” ideology. It therefore seems highly unlikely that the court would have permitted anyone to insert an extraneous figure to usurp the place of Amaterasu, thereby subverting the royal legitimation myth. On the other hand, it is simple to understand Amaterasu as a later interpolation into the myth by court genealogists eager to establish an imperial “sun-lineage” that had not really existed in earlier times.

But such reasoning leaves many questions unanswered. Was Takami-musubi the original ancestral deity of the Yamato ruling clan? If so, who was Amaterasu, and how did she become involved in the myth? Was Hononinigi originally associated with only one of those figures, and if so, with which one? And why is he represented as the *grandson* of the great deities, instead of simply their son? Finally, how is it that we have so many different forms of the myth that is foundational for the Japanese state?

To answer those questions, I shall begin by examining the principal elements in each version of the *tenson-kōrin* myth. Then, by reference to the social, political, and religious conditions of Yamato Japan, I shall suggest a process by which the myths may have evolved.

The Constituents of the Descent Myth:

1. Takami-musubi and the Enthronement

As noted above, it makes more sense a priori to consider Amaterasu—not Takami-musubi—to have been an interpolation into the *tenson-kōrin* myth. In fact, there is considerable evidence that such was the case. For one thing, most scholars consider the main text of the *Nihongi* to be the most reliable of all the varying accounts of mythical

events, and the passage containing the descent myth is no exception. For that reason alone, many scholars judge the *Nihongi* version featuring Takami-musubi to be the earliest account of the myth.¹⁵ But such a conclusion presents a significant interpretive problem. Why should the heavenly descent myth have centered around the character of Takami-musubi?

A possible answer is that Takami-musubi was the lord of the heavenly pantheon from an era before Amaterasu. As Mircea Eliade long ago observed, the eclipse of a heavenly ruler by a more dynamic newcomer is common in the history of religions.¹⁶ There is considerable evidence that Amaterasu may likewise have supplanted Takami-musubi, as, for instance, when we compare the *mythical* sections of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* with the *historical* sections of those texts. In the *mythical* sections, Amaterasu is portrayed as one of three great deities born to the primeval creator figure Izanagi. (The other two were Tsukiyomi—a moon-god who is soon all but forgotten, and Susa-no-o—the great god of the province of Izumo.) Yet, in a *historical* section of the *Nihongi*, the moon-deity (*tsuki-no-kami*) delivers an oracle, saying, “Previously my ancestor Takami-musubi had the merit of creating heaven and earth.” And the unnamed sun-deity (*hi-no-kami*) delivered a similar oracle, asking that rice fields be dedicated to “my ancestor Takami-musubi.”¹⁷

Moreover, in the first chapter of the *Kojiki*, Takami-musubi and his consort Kami-musubi appear at the creation of the world, long before the advent of Izanagi himself. And, in an ancient ritual text, the *Izumo-kuni no miyatsuko kamuyogoto*, it is actually Takami-musubi and Kami-musubi who send their descendant to earth; Amaterasu does not appear in that text at all.¹⁸ In light of these facts, and of the prominence of Takami-musubi in the *Nihongi* descent myths, a number of scholars have concluded that at one time Takami-musubi was the head of the heavenly pantheon.¹⁹ But more important is his role as an *ancestral* figure. According to two early ninth-century texts—the *Shinsen shōjiroku* of 814 and the *Kogoshūi* of 808—Takami-musubi was revered as the first ancestor of some thirty-three clans in the Kansai area alone.²⁰

The question is whether he was ever specifically considered the ancestor of the Yamato rulers. There is strong evidence that the royal house did, at one point, at least give a place of unparalleled prominence to him. For one thing, in the *Jingikan* ("Office of Religious Affairs") of the Yamato court, eight deities were enshrined, and the chief of those deities was Takami-musubi. It was not until after the ninth century that Amaterasu was even worshipped in the imperial hall.²¹ Clearly, the importance of Amaterasu to the Yamato court was, at the very least, severely limited for a very long period, while Takami-musubi was held in very high esteem from a very early time.

Of even greater importance in this connection were the eight deities associated with the *daijō-sai*, the ancient enthronement ceremony held during the annual harvest festival. During the *daijō-sai*, the emperor would recline upon a sacred couch and commune with an unnamed deity. According to modern assumptions, that deity was Amaterasu. But in reality, Amaterasu was *not* among the eight deities honored in connection with the enthronement ceremony in *Yamato* times. In the ancient materials, those deities were actually led by Takami-musubi. Furthermore, the couch upon which the new emperor would recline in the *daijō-sai* clearly corresponds to the one in the main *Nihongi* account, in which Takami-musubi—not Amaterasu—sends down Hononinigi. Because of such facts, some scholars have soundly concluded that the deity with whom the emperor communed in the *ancient* enthronement ritual was actually Takami-musubi.²²

In fact, some scholars believe that the *tenson-kōrin* myth itself originated as the "ritual myth" of the *daijō-sai* ceremony. As Manabu Waida says, "the meaning of the mythico-religious complex of the heavenly descent lies in the emperor's repetition or reenactment of the birth of Ninigi on the day of the harvest festival. . ."²³ In antiquity, the agricultural overtones of both the *tenson-kōrin* myth and the *daijō-sai* were indeed very strong. The very name of Hononinigi—the link between the heavenly deities and the later earthly rulers—means something like "Ruddy Ears of Rice."²⁴ His descent could thus be read as symbolizing the blessing of fertility bestowed upon earthly

rice-fields by the rulers of the heavenly world. But assuming some link between the *tenson-kōrin* myth and the *daijō-sai*, how are we to assess the relative importance of the themes of sovereignty and fertility? Some scholars believe that the entire complex developed out of an agricultural rite, while others argue that it represented a *pre-agricultural* “rite of renewal and succession of sovereignty;”²⁵ and some link it to Takami-musubi, while others link it to Amaterasu.²⁶

At first, an association of the *daijō-sai* with Amaterasu seems to make good sense, because it is she who appears in the two variants of the myth that stress agriculture, and because she, as a sun-deity, is eminently suited for the blessing of agricultural activities. But since she was not one of the deities mentioned in connection with the *daijō-sai* or other court rituals until a fairly late date, it seems unlikely that she was originally involved. And since neither the descent myth as a whole, nor the enthronement ceremony *per se*, seem to have had agriculture as its *primary* concern, it seems most probable that the *original* focus of each element was the establishment of a heavenly-sanctioned sovereign.

In the end, then, it seems quite likely that the prime figure in *both* the myth *and* the ritual of enthronement must have been Takami-musubi. Yet, even within the *daijō-sai* complex, there is no evidence that the Yamato rulers ever claimed actual *descent* from Takami-musubi.²⁷ The Yamato rulers, like any rulers, would have had a vested interest in their society’s high god, and the high god as the sanctifier of sovereignty is a sound principle in itself, independent of any conceivable role as imperial ancestor. But while it might be fair to characterize Takami-musubi as a *tutelary deity* of the ruling house, it would be fallacious to assume that he would necessarily have been their *ancestor* as well. It is possible that the idea of a divine ancestor developed gradually during the sixth century, under the influence of the many other clans who claimed descent from divine figures like Takami-musubi.

*The Constituents of the Descent Myth:**2. Amaterasu and the Sun*

Amaterasu is an intriguing figure. There can be no doubt of her solar nature, since her name means “shining in heaven.” But there are a number of oddities surrounding her, the foremost of which is the enormous discrepancy between the status claimed for her in later tradition and her actual position in ancient Japanese mythology and society.

As noted above, Amaterasu’s role in the life of the Yamato court was actually negligible. In fact, it is doubtful that she was even present in the cult of the early court. Meanwhile, in the ancient mythological texts, her role is erratic, and her character quite amorphous. Outside of the *tenson-kōrin* myth, she appears in only two other episodes. One is a contest of procreation with her “brother” Susa-no-o, and the other is the so-called “Myth of the Cave-retreat” (*ame-no-iwaya*).²⁸ But in *neither* of those two myths does Amaterasu’s role have any perceptible relationship to her purported status as the foremost heavenly deity.

Historians have long noted that the abrupt elevation of Amaterasu is an incongruity that disrupts the entire framework of classical Japanese mythology.²⁹ Many scholars explain her prominence by reference to political events:

Although Amaterasu . . . is assigned the central role, her character is vague and symbolic. . . Although the solar, or Yamato, cycle is made arbitrarily to dominate the mythological account, this is largely the result of the political tendencies of the compilers.³⁰

Those conclusions need further examination.

It might be useful to begin with certain observations about the phenomenology of solar deities. Mircea Eliade noted that numerous cultures associate the sun with sovereignty.³¹ The sun-deity sometimes takes on the role of less dynamic sky deities (who often double as heavenly rulers and/or creator figures). Related to that association are ideas of the sun as conqueror of the forces of darkness and disorder, and as dispenser of the blessings of life, light and fertility. One can

argue that mythical associations of rulers with the sun owe to the fact that, in the human sphere, people often look to the ruler for the fulfillment of precisely such functions. Such a tendency is certainly suggestive for understanding Amaterasu's emergence, but we should concern ourselves with more specific historical factors.

The name "Amaterasu" is just an honorific form of the phrase *ama-teru*, "to shine in heaven." Since it is so egregiously transparent, Tsuda Sōkichi regarded both the name and its bearer as purely artificial creations. Most scholars today, however, agree that the name reflects an actual cultic figure, though *not necessarily one who was originally female*. Early records of the shrines in Japan list a number dedicated to a deity named "Amateru." Most were major shrines located in Yamato and provinces just to the north. The evidence suggests that this "Amateru" was quite distinct from Amaterasu as we know her, and was presumably male.³² But in the texts, we find no mention of "Amateru" at all, only "Amaterasu."

Moreover, tradition refers Amaterasu not to any of those shrines of "Amateru," but rather to the "Great Shrine" in the Watarai district of Ise province. The data concerning the Ise shrine are crucial for understanding the rise of Amaterasu. The *Nihongi* relates a story of the founding of the Ise shrine by a princess named Yamato-hime. The entire story is problematic, and there can be little doubt that it is a pious fiction.³³ Thereafter, it is almost a hundred years before Amaterasu is mentioned again, and that reference is also rather questionable.³⁴ Amaterasu is not again mentioned by name in the *Nihongi* until the year 672, when the emperor Temmu worshipped her—some thirty reigns later.³⁵

The first truly historical reference to a Yamato princess (*saiō*) serving at the Ise shrine seems to be in the year 457 CE: in that year, a certain princess "attended to the sacrifices of the Great Deity of Ise."³⁶ But significantly, this passage makes no reference to "Amaterasu." In fact, as startling as it might seem, outside of the fabricated story of Yamato-hime, *there is not a single passage anywhere in the Nihongi or the Kojiki that names Amaterasu as the deity worshipped*

at the Ise shrine. Whenever Ise is mentioned, its inhabitant is referred to simply as “the Great Deity” (*Ō-mikami*). When worship of Amaterasu is mentioned, Ise is not.

These facts raise several questions. If, in the early Yamato period, a sun-deity named Amateru was worshipped widely in Yamato and the area to the north, one might surmise that the original Ise deity may have also been Amateru, and that he later evolved into Amaterasu.³⁷ But if such were the case, one would expect the name of Amateru/Amaterasu to have remained intimately linked with the Ise shrine from the earliest times. Yet, in the earliest sources, *neither* form of the name is regularly found in connection with that shrine. It would almost appear as if the name had been studiously *avoided*. But why would anyone have avoided the name of the deity worshipped at the Ise shrine? And how could anyone have suppressed or deleted it, when it represented (at least when the texts were presented to the court) the ancestress of the ruling house itself? Why, furthermore, should the name of Amaterasu suddenly reappear in 672, after an absence of hundreds of years? Moreover, why should a tale be invented relating the exportation of Amaterasu from Yamato to Ise, only to have no further mention of Amaterasu—at Ise or anywhere else—for so many reigns? There seems to be only one possible explanation for these facts: *no deity named Amaterasu (or even Amateru) was worshipped at the Ise shrine until the late seventh century.*

But are we dealing here only with a matter of names? Could it perhaps be that there was in fact a sun-goddess worshipped at the Ise shrine, but that she only later came to be named Amaterasu? There is evidence to support that idea. There is a passage in the *Nihongi* that refers to the Ise deity as *hi-no-kami*, meaning simply “sun-deity.”³⁸ But since that reference is unique in the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*, it would hardly seem sufficient to establish a pre-Amaterasu solar deity at the Ise shrine.³⁹ Most assume that *hi-no-kami* here is just an epithet of Amaterasu, but there is another explanation, as I shall suggest.

In the meantime, one must grant that there was indeed a shrine at Ise, during the fifth century if not earlier.⁴⁰ But it does not seem that it was associated with any solar figure. The prime evidence for

this conclusion involves the most sacrosanct ritual of the Ise shrine as practiced in historical times. That ritual had nothing to do with Amaterasu, or with her sacred mirror, imperial princesses, or anything else connected either with the court or with solar worship. Rather, it centered around a sacred pillar buried beneath the main shrine building. At the time of the great festivals, before the ceremonies surrounding Amaterasu could be conducted, three priestesses of the local Watarai clan offered sacrifices at the sacred pillar. So holy was this ceremony that no one else, not even the priestesses sent from the Japanese imperial court, was allowed to participate.⁴¹ Architectural historians affirm that the sacred pillar predated the shrine buildings dedicated to Amaterasu, and that the pillar was probably the original object of worship at the shrine.⁴²

That conclusion harmonizes with the views of several historians. For instance, in the opinion of Naoki Kōjiro, "Ise Jingu was originally the dwelling place of an indigenous territorial *kami* who was worshipped as the tutelary deity of the Ise district."⁴³ Other scholars have assumed that the focus of the Ise shrine must always have been a solar deity, and interpret the pillar as nothing but the original symbol of that deity.⁴⁴ But in actuality, no solar symbolism is attached to the pillar at the Ise shrine. To the contrary, there is always a sharp ritual differentiation between everything connected with the pillar and everything related to the worship of the sun-goddess. In fact, the worship of the sacred pillar always took place at night. Moreover, if the pillar had been the original symbol of a sun-deity who later became Amaterasu, why would the court have allowed the native Watarai clan to continue to monopolize it? Would not the court religious specialists, at least, have sought to gain control over the worship of the pillar? And why would there have been no effort to *integrate* the new, court-instituted elements with the earlier shrine traditions? The most logical explanation of these facts is that *the deity originally worshipped by the Watarai at Ise was not a solar figure at all.*⁴⁵

If, then, Amaterasu was not worshipped at court, and not native to Ise, where did she come from, and how did she come to be considered

the royal ancestress? Before addressing those questions, we should first note other important elements of ancient solar symbolism.

For one thing, it will be remembered that the story of Jimmu's eastward expedition mentions the ancestral deity Nigihayahi as "the child of the heavenly deity." His claim to that status was so strong that even Jimmu was made to acknowledge it (though in the end, of course, the Yamato chroniclers have Nigihayahi submit to Jimmu). Moreover, the reason given in the *Nihongi* for Jimmu's decision to move to Yamato was that Nigihayahi had himself earlier descended there, thus showing that Yamato was "the center of the world."⁴⁶ So to all appearances, Nigihayahi was a figure whose importance in that period exceeded even that of the Yamato heroes. Moreover, Nigihayahi was also an unquestionable solar figure,⁴⁷ as well as a leading ancestral figure: dozens of ancient clans claimed him as their ancestor, many more clans than claimed even Takami-musubi.⁴⁸ Most significantly, Nigihayahi was the reputed ancestor of a clan that was a major power at the sixth-century Yamato court, the Mononobe, a point to which we shall return. It is clear that Nigihayahi represents either a parallel to, or a prototype of, the figures of Amaterasu and Hononinigi in the descent myth.⁴⁹

Secondly, among the solar deities attested in ancient times were two important female figures—*Ō-hirume* and *Waka-hirume*, "the Great Solar Woman" and "the Young Solar Woman." The two were described sometimes as sisters, sometimes as mother and daughter.⁵⁰ At any rate, we are concerned here primarily with *Ō-hirume*. It is quite clear that, at one point, *Ō-hirume* played several roles in the mythological texts that are usually associated with Amaterasu. For instance, in the *Kojiki* and in a *Nihongi* variant, Amaterasu was born when Izanagi washed his left eye.⁵¹ But in the main text of the *Nihongi*, after Izanami and Izanagi created the land, they said: "Why should we not give birth to someone to rule the earthly realm? Consequently, they together produced the deity of the sun [*hi-no-kami*], who is called *Ō-hirume no muchi*."⁵² A *Nihongi* variant presents a transitional form of the story, in which Izanagi alone desired to produce a ruler, so he produced *Ō-hirume* from a mirror held in his left

hand.⁵³ From this sequence of myths, it is clear that someone desired to establish a sun-goddess as ruler of the world, and portrayed the primeval creators as producing Ō-hirume (not “Amaterasu”) with that object in mind. Later, someone apparently replaced the name of Ō-hirume with that of Amaterasu. The story of the sun-goddess’ heavenly contest with her “brother” Susa-no-o falls into the same category: *all* of the *Nihongi* variants of the myth mention only “the sun kami,” with no mention at all of “Amaterasu.”⁵⁴ And there is also strong reason to believe that the original “myth of the cave-retreat” was a myth of Ō-hirume, not of “Amaterasu.”⁵⁵ As in the case of the *tenson-kōrin* myth, it is entirely plausible to imagine the name of Amaterasu being interpolated into all these accounts, and very difficult to imagine it being removed if it had once been present. The most logical conclusion is that when those myths were first composed, the actual protagonist was not Amaterasu, but rather Ō-hirume (as in *Jimmu’s Pronouncement*), or simply *hi-no-kami*. It follows, therefore, that “Amaterasu” was an interpolation into every myth in which she ever appears, in all of the ancient Japanese texts.

The Formulation of the Descent Myth

The First Phase: Kimmei and the Myth of Takami-musubi

Though no ideology of exclusive direct descent was possible at the Yamato court until the sixth century, it is clear that the rulers participated in a religious system based largely upon the annual renewal of their sovereignty in the *daijō-sai*, probably involving Takami-musubi as the deity sanctioning their (re)enthronement. Such, one may conclude, was the situation when the emperor Keitai was placed upon the throne circa 507.⁵⁶ Tsuda Sōkichi argued that upon Keitai’s ascension, he felt a need to legitimize his rule by affiliating himself more closely to the preceding dynasty. For it was at that time that ancient traditions began to be collected for the first time, and a chronicle began to be drawn up, a chronicle that would immortalize both Keitai and his Yamato predecessors.

During the reigns of kings Keitai and Kimmei, two court documents were produced. The first, the *Teiki* (“Annals of the Sovereigns”),

seems originally to have been a simple king list with a register of relatives and descendants. The second, the *Kuji* (or *Kyūji*, “Ancient Traditions”), was a collection of myths and legends concerning antiquity. Both were eventually used as sources for the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*. Tsuda analyzed the traditions found in the *Kuji*, and concluded “that all of them, and especially myths, were not archaic traditions handed down among common people but were fabricated by court intellectuals in order to establish the eternal legitimacy of the imperial household to rule over the land of Japan.”⁵⁷ Since those myths included the *tenson-kōrin* myths now found in the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*, such a conclusion has profound ramifications. Since several of the principal mythic sequences corresponded to major court rituals, more recent scholars tend to discount Tsuda’s belief that all of the ancient myths were pure fabrications. But even those myths that did exist earlier, “were then transformed in accordance with the religious and political interests of the imperial household [and] modified [before being] incorporated in the *Kyūji*.”⁵⁸

That process began when Keitai and Kimmei were working to reduce the status of potential rivals and strengthen the emerging Yamato monarchy. The great clans of early Japan derived much of their status and prestige from their reputed descent from illustrious ancestors:

[In] ancient Japan . . . mythology and genealogy were intertwined to produce a fundamental value on the basis of which aristocratic social differentiation ideally and in theory rested. Realities and mythologies existed side by side, as in so many societies, then and now, but apparently it was the mythologies that were the more valued . . .⁵⁹

As seen earlier, many of the ancient aristocrats claimed descent from illustrious heroes and even from heavenly deities. But Keitai was an outsider, whose genealogy was apparently less illustrious. It was therefore necessary for him to have a new genealogy devised, which would not only stress his continuity with the earlier rulers, but also establish for the new “royal line” a pedigree superior to that claimed by other clans.

A logical first step in the fabrication of a royal genealogy was to invent a “proto-king,” located in remote antiquity. The archetype of

the “first king” is standard in ancestral myths of the rulers of many lands, including ancient Tibet and Korea.⁶⁰ The Japanese equivalent was the emperor Jimmu, to whom ancestors of other clans were simply said to have subjugated themselves. But clearly Jimmu alone would not suffice as an imperial ancestor for Keitai, since a considerable number of prominent clans claimed descent from figures far too lofty ever to be plausibly subordinated to Jimmu. Nigihayahi, for instance, was eventually represented as having submitted to Jimmu, but the abundant attention paid to him, and the emphasis placed upon the otherwise unique motif of his descent from heaven, indicate that he was actually a divine ancestor who had proven difficult to subdue. Even more difficult would have been the widespread claims to descent from heavenly figures like Takami-musubi. At least Nigihayahi descended to earth, but Takami-musubi was the ruler of heaven itself, and never descended. It would thus have been difficult to create a scenario suggesting that Jimmu’s descendants should hold authority over the descendants of Takami-musubi.

Since there was already an intimate relationship between the earlier Yamato kings and Takami-musubi, the early-sixth century mythographers may well have reasoned that they could claim their tutelary deity as a royal *ancestor* by adapting the enthronement ritual. The only necessary change would be a re-direction: instead of having the ruler going *up* to the throne in a *ritual* sense, Takami-musubi could send the throne *down* to him in a *temporal* sense. While there may have been several ways in which such a dispensation could have been expressed, the easiest was simply to have Takami-musubi dispatch a representative to earth bearing a token of the heavenly ruler’s authority. The sovereignty of the Yamato court could thus be traced back beyond Jimmu, all the way to that representative. It seems probable that the *tenson-kōrin* myth was originally no more elaborate than this. We may even have the earliest form of the myth, preserved in the *Izumo-kuni no miyatsuko kamuyogoto*, the ancient *norito* text mentioned earlier. In it, no elaboration whatever accrues to the episode: the divine descendant whom Takami-musubi sends down to rule the

earth actually remains nameless.⁶¹ The ritual of the *daijō-sai* provided what the mythographers needed to fill out the details of their new descent myth.

But it must be remembered that the enthronement ritual was an element of the New Year festival, the primary emphasis of which was agricultural. The principal figure in the agrarian segments of the festival was apparently Hononinigi, the spirit of the new rice-ears. Perhaps Hononinigi was first imagined not just as the personification of the new ears of rice, but as a fructifying rice-spirit sent down by the lord of heaven, Takami-musubi. It would have been a relatively easy step to see Hononinigi as Takami-musubi's "seed" in a new, more political sense: Hononinigi could be re-interpreted as the descendant of Takami-musubi. Since Hononinigi was already conceived as a figure who descended from heaven, it remained only to transform him from a fertility figure into the bearer of supreme political authority. A simple method of achieving that transformation would be to have Takami-musubi bestow upon his emissary a suitable item associated with the heavenly throne. In the primary text of the *Nihongi*, we find just such a scenario: Takami-musubi (appearing alone) cloaks Hononinigi with a coverlet from his throne before sending him to earth. Thematically, this version is the simplest form of the *tenson-kōrin* myth found in either of the primary texts, and it represents a very logical development from the events that take place in the enthronement ritual.

I propose that this was the process by which the descent myth first took form, with Takami-musubi and Hononinigi as the principals. Granted, other clans could still claim descent from Takami-musubi, but none could claim that he sent down their ancestor for the expressed purpose of ruling the land. The Yamato kings' exclusive right to such a claim could be asserted by reference to the *daijō-sai*. The myth and the ritual thus supported each other.

But for some reason, the natural development of the myth was abruptly interrupted at this point: the concept of Takami-musubi as the ancestor of the Yamato kings was nipped in the bud, and the myth

of his sending Hononinigi to earth underwent no further organic development. Instead, *an entirely new* process began: Takami-musubi stood aside, and “Amaterasu” took over. Why this sudden change? Was there some fatal flaw in the Takami-musubi myth that necessitated setting it aside? Or was there rather some sudden change in the *historical conditions*? If the latter was the case, how and why did conditions change so drastically? And why was a solar deity introduced, when solar elements had hitherto played no role at all, either in the royal descent myth or in the royal cult? Finally, why, after “Amaterasu” was introduced, was Takami-musubi not expunged completely from the myth? It is to these questions that I shall now turn.

The Formulation of the Descent Myth

The Second Phase: Kimmei and the Myth of Ō-hirume

The kingdom of Yamato was not developing in a vacuum. As the Yamato kings were expanding their sway during the fifth and sixth centuries, the Korean peninsula was undergoing upheavals as a result of the ongoing strife among the Three Kingdoms—Silla, Koguryo and Paekche. A considerable number of people fled the unsettled conditions there and immigrated to the islands of Japan.⁶² Their arrival is the subject of repeated notices in the *Nihongi*. And naturally, the immigrants brought with them many elements of their native cultures, including religious and mythical traditions. Most of the cultural regions of ancient Korea had myths of ancestral heroes who had founded the land, and by the middle of the sixth century, at least, myths from Koguryo and Silla affiliated that hero to the sun.⁶³ Both Japanese and Korean sources contain elements suggesting that a tradition of solar parentage for the founding ancestor was transmitted from Silla to Japan during this period.⁶⁴ But the Korean immigrants brought more than their native traditions. They also brought with them a new and highly sophisticated religion—Buddhism. At the outset, Buddhism did not spread widely among the indigenous populace: it was practiced primarily among the cultured Korean immigrants.⁶⁵ But in the middle of the sixth century, that situation began to change.

The *Nihongi* story of the introduction of Buddhism at the Yamato court is well known. In 538, the king of Paekche, seeking military support, sent an image of the Buddha and a set of Buddhist scriptures to the court of king Kimmei. Kimmei, cognizant of the political implications of the offering, was uncertain whether to accept, and consulted the leading nobles. The leaders of the priestly Nakatomi clan and the military Mononobe clan strongly opposed acceptance: they argued that rulers had always relied upon native deities, who might become irate if the king were to accept the foreign doctrine. But arguments in favor of Buddhism were advanced by the leader of the Soga clan, which had cultivated strong ties of intermarriage with the royal family. The king eventually allowed the Soga leader to worship the image privately, but a plague reportedly followed, and in 552 the Nakatomi and Mononobe persuaded the king to burn down the Soga temple and throw the image into a canal. Yet, the following year, the king changed his mind, had two Buddhist images constructed, and sent the king of Paekche the troops that he had requested. Soon, Buddhist priests and artisans from the mainland began arriving at the court.⁶⁶

We have no detailed information on the response of those who opposed the foreign doctrine at court. Yet we can draw certain inferences. It cannot be doubted but that Kimmei's decision to permit the practice of Buddhism provoked serious anxiety among many of the traditional leaders. As John Whitney Hall observes, "To the ruling families of Yamato who based their political authority in important part upon their claim of descent from the *kami* native to the Japanese islands, Buddhism presented a real and even frightening threat."⁶⁷ Within the Yamato court, there were leaders who had good reason to feel threatened by the introduction of Buddhism: the religious leaders, the Nakatomi and Imibe, derived their position from their status as intermediaries between the king and the deities worshipped at court. But it would be difficult for them to play the role of intermediaries between the king and the Buddha. If Buddhism continued to rise in importance, a time might come when it would displace the existing

court traditions, and clans like the Nakatomi and Imibe would stand to decline in both prestige and prosperity.

The new religion also posed a threat in another way. Much of the power at court had long been exercised by the Mononobe clan. But since it was the Soga who championed the new tradition, they would stand to eclipse the Mononobe if Buddhism were to become the court religion. The events of 538 suggest that both the Mononobe and the priestly clans perceived these dangers quickly, and fought the importation of Buddhism from the outset.⁶⁸ But their initial success was short-lived: by 553, the king had begun to exhibit a willingness to allow Buddhism to prosper. It stands to reason that the Mononobe and Nakatomi would have seen the need to take a hard new look at the matter, and to formulate a new course of action to prevent deeper inroads by the new religion. Of course, the immediate danger to the clans in power lay not in the personal beliefs of the emperor, nor in the traditions popular among the masses. Rather, the danger was that the emperor might adopt Buddhism as a new court religion, thereby revolutionizing court institutions and the conceptual foundations of the Yamato state. The importance of these matters for our purposes involves their timing: the “threat” of Buddhism presented itself during the reign of king Kimmei. And, as suggested in the preceding section, it was just at that point that the court mythographers had worked out an entire legitimacy schema based upon the divine ancestry of the Yamato sovereign. The effectiveness of that schema was now an issue that had to be reconsidered.

Did the necessity of combating the sudden intrusion of Buddhism mean that the myth of the ruler’s descent from Takami-musubi had to be abandoned? No, for the opponents of Buddhism had grasped the meaning of the moment very quickly, and now had the opportunity to take action before the new religion ensconced itself firmly, either at court or in Japanese society as a whole. Kimmei’s acceptance of Buddhism had been limited and cautious, and the *Nihongi* indicates that virtually no Japanese other than the Soga had adopted it. Presumably, then, the other clan leaders could be counted upon to act in traditional ways. So the danger to the opponents of Buddhism

was also an opportunity: if they could respond in time, and devise a well-conceived plan, they might be able to check the new threat.

But of what would such a plan consist? First of all, it would have to rest firmly upon traditional *ancestral* beliefs. The social and political identity of every leading clan was intimately linked to traditional ancestors. Yet, tradition is never a static thing: it is a thing alive and vital, adapting to fit the changing conditions of each era. That is precisely the reason that a royal descent myth had been constructed in the first place: the house of Keitai had wished to bolster itself by forging a closer link with earlier tradition. In so doing, it had to reinterpret some elements of that tradition, but reinterpretation is an ongoing process in every living tradition. With due care and consideration, a tradition can often be harmonized more closely with new and changing realities, thereby actually reinforcing the tradition by realigning it with powerful contemporary attitudes and behavior.

The actions of Kimmei in 538 demonstrate that the descent myth of Takami-musubi had been powerless to prevent the initial encroachment of Buddhism. These facts could not have been lost upon the court mythographers, who had a great deal at stake. They had to revise the royal descent myth, to give it new strength for the future. But how? We can deduce that it was here that the mythographical process was given an infusion of fresh blood. The only parties involved in the development of the *original* form of the myth would have been the court religious specialists, like the Nakatomi and Imibe. But *after* the debate over Buddhism, the ritualists would have had a new ally—the Mononobe, who had their own cogent reasons for resisting the Soga and their alien faith. After the pro-Buddhist measures of 553, the priestly clans and the Mononobe would doubtless have realized that they now had an overriding common interest, and that they must work together. Though we lack direct evidence about that process, there is considerable indirect evidence in the form of the new, revised version of the *tenson-kōrin* myth. By comparing that myth with the earlier version, we can construct a scenario that accounts for the myths as we now have them.

The religious clans and the Mononobe would not always have seen matters in the same light. For instance, since the Nakatomi and Imibe were hereditary ritualists, it stands to reason that they would generally have tried to maintain accepted traditions. Since both of those clans seem to have had a particularly close connection with Takami-musubi,⁶⁹ they would probably have wished to preserve the original descent myth with as little change as possible. The Mononobe, on the other hand, had *no* vested interest in Takami-musubi, so it stands to reason that they would be willing to make whatever changes in myth or ritual might seem necessary to undercut the Soga power play. For instance, they may have argued that it was necessary to identify the strongest religious trends of the moment and harness them to give added weight to the legitimacy complex. Such arguments may have carried weight among some of the more open-minded of the court religious leaders, who may have sided with the Mononobe to form what might be called the *reformist* branch of the traditionalist coalition—a group willing to take a fresh, realistic look at the social, political, and religious conditions of the age.

Let us consider what such realists would have seen when they looked beyond court ritual (and beyond Buddhism) in the mid-sixth century. First, several solar cults were strong in Japan, including those of Ō-hirume and Amateru. Secondly, the Korean immigrants, who were beginning to achieve social significance, had traditions that the ruler is conceived through the agency of the sun. The reformists may have developed the idea of taking advantage of such realities: investing the Yamato king with a new ancestry that carried solar associations would not only turn to good account the popularity of solar deities among the native populace, in Yamato and beyond. It might also hold some appeal for the Korean immigrants, perhaps facilitating their more complete integration into the Japanese political system and, more importantly, undermining the primary power base of the Buddhist religion.

It is at this point that the Mononobe would have been able to provide fresh ideas, for their clan already claimed descent from a solar figure, Nigihayahi. A new myth for the royal house could

be developed along the lines of the myth of Nigihayahi, perhaps also incorporating the strongest elements of the old Takami-musubi descent myth. There was no inherent problem with Hononinigi as the ruler's ancestor: the weakness of the first descent myth simply involved the rather otiose Takami-musubi, whose importance was largely restricted to the court and certain noble clans. So instead of having Takami-musubi dispatch the royal ancestor, why not have a dynamic new solar deity send him down? Such a change would make good sense in terms of the traditional harvest festival, for the sun is well-suited for dispensing the blessing of a fruitful harvest.

But the key question would be the identity of the solar deity to be introduced. Nigihayahi had solar associations, and was very popular as an ancestral figure, but that fact might have been precisely the problem: too many other clans claimed him as their progenitor. Since it was still necessary for the descent myth to uphold the royal dignity *above* that of all other clans, it was imperative that it depict the king as descending from a *sun-deity on whom no other clan held any prior claim*. The cult of the deity Amateru was demonstrably strong in the Kansai area, and there is no evidence that Amateru had previously been an ancestral figure on a large scale. Nor is there any evidence that his worship had been solidly ensconced at a single shrine with a powerful indigenous priesthood, which might complicate any effort to appropriate its deity.⁷⁰ Hence, Amateru would certainly have been a logical candidate. But on the other hand, the cults of the solar deities Ō-hirume and Waka-hirume were also fairly vigorous. Ō-hirume, in particular, seems to have been prominent in Kii, the province south of Yamato, where a strong branch of the Imibe clan was based. Perhaps it was for that reason that some of the reformists favored her. To judge by the textual evidence examined above, the faction that favored Ō-hirume was far stronger at this point than any that may have favored Amateru. In any event, the reformists of Kimmei's reign could *all* agree that the kings should be said to descend from "the sun deity," *hi-no-kami*.

If my analysis is correct, the myth that resulted would have been the prototype of the *Kojiki* version of the myth, according to which

Amaterasu alone sent down her son Oshihomimi.⁷¹ But I propose that in that prototype, as in the other myths that now feature Amaterasu, it was not originally “Amaterasu” who appeared, but rather the goddess “Ō-hirume.”⁷² In addition, I propose that the gratuitous figure of Oshihomimi was invented at this time to take the place of Hononinigi, just as the ancestral sun-deity was being introduced to take the place of Takami-musubi.⁷³ In any event, here at last was a mythic package that the reformists could present as a new, improved royal descent myth. Precedented by Nigihayahi and powered by the sun-cult, here was a scheme that, in the minds of some at least, seemed stronger in facing the political challenge of Buddhism than the original Takami-musubi version.

Yet it stands to reason that the more *conservative* members of the anti-Buddhist coalition might have resisted such a scheme. Their arguments would have been clear. First, the protagonists of the new myth were unknown in the old royal cult. Secondly, the new myth completely ignored the *daijō-sai*. And thirdly, Takami-musubi was still a respected figure, though the days of his greatest prominence might now be past. These conservatives could—with reason—insist that the new solar scheme was really no better than the old one, and that the existing one was at least already accepted.

But the coalition’s plan could succeed only if all parties could agree upon a single schema. So despite any difference of opinions, the fact that they all shared the same compelling interests necessitated a compromise. But if either side had to concede the major elements of its schema, that group could hardly be expected to support the resulting compromise wholeheartedly. So a method had to be found to preserve the basic status of each side’s legitimacy schema.

One idea that apparently arose was that of uniting the two principals in marriage, and portraying the heavenly descendant as their common offspring. Of course, such an arrangement would be possible only if the protagonists were of different genders, such as Takami-musubi and Ō-hirume. The *Nihongi* actually preserves a fairly early form of the descent myth, placed, significantly, in the mouth of Jimmu

himself. According this passage (which I shall call *Jimmu's Pronouncement*), Hononinigi was jointly dispatched by those two figures:

'In antiquity our heavenly deities Takami-musubi no mikoto and Ō-hirume no mikoto adverted to this land of abundant reed-plains and fresh rice-ears, and bestowed it upon our heavenly ancestor, Hiko hononinigi no mikoto ...'⁷⁴

Yet it is noteworthy that here *no familial relationship at all* is posited for the characters.

Since no other version of the myth suggests the marriage of Takami-musubi and a sun-deity, it would seem that that idea was never seriously entertained. I would infer simply that the political support for a feminine sun-deity was, at first, too weak to sway the entire coalition.⁷⁵ Moreover, an arranged marriage of two such figures, each with its own block of supporters at court, would presuppose an artificial equality, which would likely be uneasy: at any time, supporters of one figure could gain prominence at the expense of the other, and a threeway struggle could ensue among the adherents of each divinity and the proponents of the ideal of compromise. Such prospects would leave the door open to discord, when what was most needed to stave off the challenge of the pro-Buddhist faction was a firm mutual commitment within the coalition.

To judge from the texts, these facts were tacitly appreciated, for a different compromise was reached. Instead of wedding the two principals to each other, the mythographers united them in an alliance commonly practiced by earthly rulers: a child of each party was joined in marriage, leaving the principals fundamentally independent. The varying versions of the descent myth strongly suggest that the characters in the two primary myths were developed in just this way: Takami-musubi was given a gratuitous daughter, who was then married to the sun-deity's son. Hononinigi, perhaps once imagined as the son of Takami-musubi, was then worked in as the son of that pair, and thus as the grandson of both the grand heavenly deities.⁷⁶ By having this grandson—rather than a son—descend to earth as the Yamato progenitor, it became possible for the kings to be seen as the descendants of *either* high deity. This equivocal solution would

logically be acceptable to everyone: the reformists could claim royal descent from the sun—thereby exploiting the vitality of the solar cults—while the conservatives could continue to claim descent from Takami-musubi—thus maintaining the traditional link to the *daijō-sai*. In exchange for demoting Hononinigi to the status of a grandson, the reformists stripped the sun-deity's "son" (Oshihomimi) of his proposed status as the heavenly descendant, and relegated him to the background. With these compromises in place, the anti-Buddhists at court could present the throne with a single mythic scenario of royal descent, a scenario supported by all the traditional religious specialists as well as by the powerful Mononobe. Privately, of course, the members of the coalition remained free to draw up accounts of the myth that better suited their diverse sensibilities; such diverse creations appear in the various formulations of the *tenson-kōrin* myth preserved in the ancient texts.

Yet, between the time the traditionalists thus perfected their new descent myth and the time of the compilation of the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*, the features of the descent myth changed considerably. No longer was the solar protagonist Ō-hirume, as in *Jimmu's Pronouncement*, or even the generic *hi-no-kami*. Rather, in many of the new variants it was a new figure altogether—Amaterasu. The reasons, once again, may be sought in Yamato history.

The Rise and Fall of the Traditionalist Coalition

As noted above, Kimmei vacillated in his response to Buddhism: for almost twenty years, he allowed the Soga a free hand, and it stands to reason that that interval (553-571) was the time of the greatest consternation for the anti-Buddhist faction. It is quite logical to infer that it was during that period that the court mythographers formulated the new descent myth, which featured Hononinigi as the grandson of two heavenly deities. But there is no indication that Kimmei's attitude toward Buddhism ever changed. It would seem, then, that if the traditionalists actually presented the new myth to the throne during that period, Kimmei remained fundamentally unresponsive.

With Kimmei's demise, however, matters soon changed. The *Nihongi* states explicitly that his son and successor, Bitatsu (r. 572-585), "did not believe in Buddhism."⁷⁷ At first, he seems to have had little interest in the native religious traditions either, but apparently the traditionalists gradually prevailed upon him, for during his sixth year (577), he ordered the establishment of a "guild for worship of the sun" (*hi-no-matsuri-be*).⁷⁸ The guild's precise functions are not known, but the most plausible explanation would seem to be that it constituted a formal cultic context for the solar descent myth. The foundation of such a cult would require a shrine suitable for a solar deity, but one that was not previously inhabited by any other solar figure. If the new deity were placed at the shrine of an existing solar cult—with an existing priesthood—the leaders of the new guild might have had trouble maintaining control, and the urgency of the Buddhist threat at court would not permit further complications.

The historical records give no clear indication of the shrine involved with the founding of the *hi-no-matsuri-be*.⁷⁹ One might suspect that it was the Ise shrine. But a mythic account preserved in the *Nihongi* and other texts suggests that another shrine may actually have been involved—the Hinokuma shrine in Kii.⁸⁰ Matsumae Takeshi argues that the sun-deity established by the Yamato court was first enshrined at Hinokuma, only later being moved to Ise.⁸¹ In any event, the royal sun-cult must have been instituted at some such non-Ise shrine, for (as noted above) when a priestess was appointed to the Ise shrine in the following year, there is still no mention of any solar deity there.⁸²

The first indication of a royal solar cult at the Ise shrine appears in 585, when Bitatsu's successor, Yōmei, appointed a new priestess to serve the Ise *hi-no-kami* (of course, still not "Amaterasu").⁸³ Yōmei's reign was pivotal, because of events in the court struggle over Buddhism. After Kimmei's decision to permit the new religion in 553, it had made little headway. But in 584, under Bitatsu, the Soga leader built a temple, ordained several girls as nuns, and began regular observances under the aegis of a former priest from Korea. In historical terms, this event may seem inconsequential, but it was enough to

disturb the Sogas' adversaries at court. In 585, the Mononobe and Nakatomi were again protesting, and the king ordered the practices ended. But when a plague of sores struck, the king again permitted the Soga to practice Buddhism, so long as they did not attempt to spread it. Nonetheless, he soon died.⁸⁴

In the reign of his successor, Yōmei, tensions increased and the stakes grew. Yōmei was Bitatsu's half-brother by a different mother, a member of the Soga clan. The pivotal nature of Yōmei's reign is signalled by the *Nihongi's* notice that the new king both believed in Buddhism and "reverenced the Way of the Gods" (*Shintō*, the first attestation of this term for the native traditions of Japan). The appointment of a new Ise priestess in 585 was one of Yōmei's first acts. Yet, she was to be the last for a hundred years, apparently because the pro-Buddhist Soga faction was contriving to dominate the court. In 587, Yōmei became ill after performing a traditional ritual, and immediately announced an interest in embracing Buddhism. When a prince whom the Mononobe had been supporting announced in favor of Buddhism, the Mononobe and Nakatomi leaders flew into a rage, and the other court officials turned against them.⁸⁵

With these events, the backbone of the anti-Soga coalition was broken, and the Soga leader emerged as the dominant force at the court. Such was his power that within a few years, he was able to place his own ruler upon the throne—the empress Suiko. This event (592) marked the decisive victory of Buddhism at court, for both Suiko and her regent, the renowned Prince Shōtoku, favored the new faith. Just over a year later, Suiko formally ordered Shōtoku and the Soga leader to promote Buddhism in the empire (594). And, since the power of the Nakatomi and Mononobe had been broken, there was no longer any force at court to stay the growth of the new religion. The native religious traditions were allowed to fall into relative oblivion at court. Institutional reforms were ordered, intended to transform the Japanese state into a replica of Sui/T'ang China.

From these events, it would appear that the traditionalists' efforts with their royal descent myth had completely failed. The *hi-no-matsuri-be* had been established in 577, and had been instituted at

Ise by 585, but a scant seven years later Buddhism had become the court religion, and the traditionalists' worst fears were realized. Yet, unbeknownst to them, their labors had not been in vain: they had managed to plant seeds within the traditions of the Yamato court, and those seeds would one day prove to be extremely fertile indeed.

Temmu and the Culmination of the Tradition

After the victory of Buddhism, the indigenous traditions were not embraced at court again until nearly a century later, in 673. In that year, the emperor Temmu came to the throne following a bitter succession struggle.⁸⁶ Temmu was an energetic ruler with strong ambition and political acumen, and, though he continued Buddhist observances, he took vigorous measures to assert the superiority of the throne and to control the means by which political authority would be defined in his realm. These measures establish him as the single most influential force in the definition of the historical Japanese kingship.

Temmu's plan—highly successful in many ways—was to separate his authority from the China-oriented reforms of his predecessors since Shōtoku's time, and to re-define that authority, in terms that no one should challenge. For instance, in 683 he claimed—for the first time in history—the status of “manifest deity” (*akitsu-mi-kami*).⁸⁷ From then until 1945, the emperor of Japan was officially revered as a living deity. Another of Temmu's new measures was the *ka-bane* system, a newly articulated hierarchy in which the clans that had supported him enjoyed higher standing. In order to legitimize that system, he once again stressed *descent from mythical ancestors* as the prime criterion for determining social status.⁸⁸ And naturally, he combined that measure with a renewed emphasis upon *the mythic origins of the royal house* and upon the religious institutions that supported its claims to ancestral superiority. For instance, he performed the *daijō-sai* for the first time in decades. He also sent a princess to Ise for the first time in nearly a century, and instituted the still-living practice of periodically rebuilding the Ise shrine. Hence, the

historic tradition of imperial descent from the deity of Ise owes directly to Temmu, without whom the concept of the emperor in Japan would have taken a completely different direction, framed primarily in Chinese and Buddhist terms.⁸⁹

Of particular importance here is the fact that it was under Temmu that *the name of Amaterasu appears for the first time* in a historical section of the *Nihongi*.⁹⁰ There is little doubt that this reference to Amaterasu in 673—the year of Temmu’s accession—was the first one contemporary with the events recorded.⁹¹ While, as seen above, a solar cult had existed at Ise as of 585, as late as 645 it still did not involve a figure named Amaterasu.⁹² So where did “Amaterasu” come from? Had the Ise deity been known simply as *hi-no-kami* all the way to Temmu’s time? Apparently not, for the *Gishiki-chō* states that the Ise deity was sometimes known as Ō-hirume.⁹³ But by the year 673, it was definitely named “Amaterasu.”

What had been taking place at Ise during the century of Buddhist ascendance between 585 and 673? Our data are extremely meager. The pro-Buddhist faction controlled the court throughout the period, and any traditionalists who survived at court would have naturally kept a low profile. Yet certain conclusions seem possible. It will be remembered that while the traditionalists were creating the second descent myth, two distinct solar cults were available for consideration: that of Ō-hirume, and that of Amateru. At first, Ō-hirume clearly enjoyed much greater support, for it was she who was named as the royal ancestress in the revised descent myth. But *after 585, when the royal cult was relocated to Ise*, Ō-hirume lost much of her identity, and she survived merely as the “sun-deity,” *hi-no-kami*. Yet her reign as the royal ancestress was of lasting significance, for *the imprint of her gender endured*. It must have lingered in the minds of religious specialists, both at the court and at Ise, down through the seventh century. Meanwhile the cult of Amateru persisted in Yamato and neighboring regions, and apparently made an impression upon some of the religious specialists, even though they were now out of favor. Perhaps they felt that the Amateru cult might someday be strong enough to recover the royal favor, if a sympathetic ruler should ever

mount the throne. Certainly “*hi-no-kami*” was too vague a figure to serve as a permanent royal ancestor, and the standing of Ō-hirume had dwindled since the cult was moved to Ise.

For these reasons, I propose that during the period of obscurity between the victory of the pro-Buddhist Soga in 592 and Temmu’s accession in 673, court mythographers began working “Amateru” into the royal mythology in place of both Ō-hirume and *hi-no-kami*. In the process, they elevated the name of Amateru into the honorific form “Amaterasu,” and further distinguished it by adding the epithet Ō-mikami (“Great Deity”), which had traditionally been attached to the indigenous deity of the Ise shrine. In addition, since there was already a strong tradition that the solar ancestor was female, the new figure of “Amaterasu” retained that imagery, a legacy of the old goddess Ō-hirume.⁹⁴

This, I propose, was the state of affairs when Temmu appeared in 673, determined to assert royal supremacy by reviving the native court religion and strengthening its links with the Ise shrine. Here at last was the patron for whom the traditional religious specialists had longed since the end of the sixth century, when the Buddhist forces had submerged the native traditions. Since he was now far removed from the conflicting concerns of the sixth-century traditionalists, Temmu would have had little reason to hesitate in approving the newly formulated sun-goddess “Amaterasu” as the royal ancestress, or in accepting her identification with the amorphous solar deity who had been enshrined at Ise since 585.

In addition, it was Temmu who ordered the surviving mythic and historic materials (such as the *Teiki* and the *Kuji*) to be re-edited, so that his new political order could be presented as solidly grounded in ancient traditions.⁹⁵ Thus in the resultant *Kojiki*, and in some *Nihongi* accounts, the name of the sun-deity and royal ancestress came to be “Amaterasu,” though the earlier traditions had actually featured Takami-musubi, then Ō-hirume. At some point, a tale had to be created to explain how “Amaterasu” came to be enshrined at Ise. The

mythographers of the late seventh century, however, had a very imperfect sense of history, and their anachronistic placement of that tale in the remote age of Sūjin and Suinin is brimming with implausibilities.

We are extremely fortunate that variant accounts in the *Nihongi* preserve the earlier forms of the myths, including the *tenson-kōrin* myths featuring their original protagonists, Takami-musubi and Ō-hirume. Perhaps it was from respect for tradition that no one made a concerted effort to go through all of the historical records and systematically substitute the name of Amaterasu as the royal ancestress, or as the deity of the Ise shrine. Because of that fact, the records of ancient Japanese myth and court religion remain in their present form, a jumble of dissonant myths of different periods, in which the “sun-goddess Amaterasu,” a creation of unknown seventh-century dissidents, was artificially promoted to play the roles that had once belonged to the *real* royal Yamato deities, Takami-musubi and Ō-hirume.

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¹ See H. Paul Varley, trans., *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinnō Shōtōki of Kitabatake Chikafusa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 7.

² See Russell Kirkland, “‘The Horseriders’ in Korea: A Critical Evaluation of a Historical Theory,” *Korean Studies* 5 (1981), 109-128; Walter Edwards, “Event and Process in the Founding of Japan: The Horserider Theory in Archeological Perspective,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 9 (1983), 265-295.

³ The term “mythohistories” is from Joseph M. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 56, 112. For a detailed analysis of the nature and composition of the *Nihongi*, see Sakamoto Tarō, *The Six National Histories of Japan*, trans. John S. Brownlee (Vancouver/Tokyo: UBC Press/University of Tokyo Press, 1991), pp. 30-89.

⁴ *Kojiki, Norito*, ed. Kurano Kenji and Takeda Yūkichi (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1958), pp. 216f., 246f., 280f., 320f.; Donald L. Philippi, trans., *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press/Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 245, 282, 321, 364f. Manabu Waida assumes that “*Hi-no-miko* was a sacred designation generally used to adore the *Ō-kimi* [the Yamato king] of the fifth-century dynasty”: Waida, “Sacred Kingship in Early Japan: A Historical Introduction,” *History of Religions* 15 (1976),

321. But the term *hi-no-miko* does not appear in any historical section of the *Kojiki*, nor in any prose in the legendary sections, nor in any part of the *Nihongi*. Moreover, Philippi (363 n. 6) points out that one song placed in the reign of a fifth-century king seems actually to date rather from the early seventh century.

⁵ See Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 8-11. This title could not predate the seventh century, since the term *sumera-mikoto* ("emperor") was adopted only in the reign of the empress Suiko.

⁶ Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Some Reflections on Japanese Religion and its Relationship to the Imperial System," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17 (1990), 134.

⁷ Most scholars today believe that the first nine rulers mentioned in the sources were not historical, and that the first Yamato ruler (or *Ō-kimi*) was Sūjin, whose line (called by some the Miwa Dynasty) lasted from the latter part of the third century through most of the fourth. Many believe that toward the end of the fourth century, the Miwa line was replaced by the "Naniwa dynasty," identified with the figure of the ruler Ōjin. Yet, through the fifth century, the office of the *Ō-kimi* was not vested in a single hereditary line, but was open to any number of scions of the *kimi* families who were related to the throne. One study has indicated that there were actually two "royal lines" during the Naniwa dynasty. So since there was no single line of direct succession, there could have been no legitimacy scheme based upon such succession until a later period. For these matters, see generally Ryōsuke Ishii, *A History of Political Institutions in Japan* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1980), pp. 7-15; and Cornelius J. Kiley, "State and Dynasty in Archaic Yamato," *Journal of Asian Studies* (1973), pp. 30-40. Richard J. Miller makes the following observation: "No scholar today believes that the apical social and political position occupied by the emperor and the other scions of the Sun Line derived in ancient Japan from the exalted position and prestige of their ancestress, Amaterasu Ohomikami, and yet this idea or feeling still lurks in the emotional recesses of some people who believe or feel that the remarkable survival and continuity of the imperial line and the imperial institution may be so attributed." Miller, *Ancient Japanese Nobility: The Kabane Ranking System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 145.

⁸ See *Fudoki*, ed. Akimoto Kichiro (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1958), pp. 106, 178, and 216; M. Y. Aoki, trans., *Izumo Fudoki* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971), pp. 85, 114, 129. The *Izumo Fudoki* (compiled in 733 CE) records the local traditions of the province of Izumo.

⁹ *Nihon-shoki*, ed. Sakamoto Tarō et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1965-67), I, 438ff., translation mine. Cf. W. G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi* (1896; rept. Rutland, Vermont: Charles Tuttle, 1972), p. 316.

¹⁰ *Nihongi*, 208ff., translation mine; cf. Aston., 127f. Cf. also *Nihongi*, 189f. (Aston, 110f).

¹¹ *Nihongi*, 134f., 140f. (Aston, 64, 70). Cf. *Nihongi*, 156f., 160f. (Aston, 86f., 89f.).

¹² *Nihongi*, 142-149 (Aston, 73-79), *Kojiki* 110f., 124f. (Philippi, 120f., 137ff.).

¹³ *Nihongi*, 152-154 (Aston, 82-84).

¹⁴ Two scholars once suggested that the compilers of the *Kogoshūi* did precisely that, replacing Amaterasu with Takami-musubi. See Genchi Katō and Hikoshirō Hoshino, trans., *Kogoshūi*, 3rd ed. (1926; reprinted London: Curzon Press, 1972), p. 4.

¹⁵ See for example Matsumae Takeshi, "The Myth of the Descent of the Heavenly Grandson," *Asian Folklore Studies* 42 (1983), 159-179; and Manabu Waida, "Symbolism of 'Descent' in Tibetan Sacred Kingship and Some East Asian Parallels," *Numen* 20 (1973), pp. 60-78, at p. 64.

¹⁶ See for example Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 138ff.; and *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: Collins, 1958), pp. 109ff.

¹⁷ *Nihongi*, 524f., translation mine: cf. Aston, 391f. According to the *Nihongi* chronology, the incident occurred in 487 CE; the *Kojiki* chronology would place the events around the year 500.

¹⁸ The *Izumo-kuni no miyatsuko kamuyogoto* is an ancient *norito* ritual text that was included in the *Engi-shiki* (completed 927 CE). Philippi calls this particular *norito* "one of the oldest of the ritual formulas in the *Engi-shiki*." See Donald L. Philippi, trans., *Norito* (Tokyo: Kokugakuin University, 1959), p. 12. See also Felicia Gressitt Bock, trans., *Engi-shiki* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1970-72), II, 103. One *Nihongi* variant describes Hononinigi as the grandson of Kami-musubi, mentioning neither Amaterasu nor Takami-musubi: *Nihongi*, 162f. (Aston, 91).

¹⁹ See for instance F. K. Numazawa, *Die Weltanfänge in der japanischen Mythologie* (Lucern: J. Stocker Verlag, 1946), pp. 126-135; Oka Masao, "Das Werden der japanischen Volkskultur," *Beiträge zur Japanologie* 3 (1966), 28-54, at p. 30; and Robert S. Ellwood, *The Feast of Kingship: Accession Ceremonies in Ancient Japan* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1973), pp. 159, 162.

²⁰ See Saiki Arikiyo, ed., *Shinsen shōjiroku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kichikawa kōbunkan, 1962-63); and Katō and Hoshino, trans., *Kogoshūi*, p. 57f.

²¹ See, e.g. Katō and Hoshino, *Kogoshūi*, p. 34; and Bock, *Engi-shiki*, I, 19-22.

²² See, e.g., Matsumae, 1983, p. 170; Ellwood, pp. 42, 63f. For the *daijō-sai*, see Ellwood, *passim*; D. C. Holtom, *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1972); Felicia Bock, "The Great Feast of the Enthronement," *Monumenta Nipponica* 45 (1990), 27-38, and "The Enthronement Rites: The Text of *Engishiki*, 927," *Monumenta Nipponica* 45 (1990), 307-337; and Carmen Blacker, "The *Shinza* or God-seat in the *Daijōsai*," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17 (1990), 179-197.

²³ Waida, 1976, p. 339.

²⁴ See Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 456. In one *Nihongi* variant of the descent myth, Amaterasu tells him to rule "the Land of the Fresh Rice-ears," and in another she gives her son "heavenly rice-ears" to take down with him: *Nihongi*, 146f., 152f. (Aston, 77, 83).

²⁵ The first view is that of Matsumae, 1983 (cf. Waida, 1976, p. 339). The second view is that of Ellwood, pp. 42, 71 n. 61. In a recent work, Matsumae argues that most other provincial clan leaders (including the ruler of Izumo) "probably held such ceremonies . . . perhaps symbolizing the renewal of the governor's authority and the rejuvenation of the cosmos and the earth." See Matsumae, "Early Kami Worship," in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1: Ancient Japan*, edited by Delmer M. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 342-343.

²⁶ The first view is again that of Matsumae, e.g., 1993, p. 354; cf. J. H. Kamstra, *Encounter or Syncretism? The Initial Growth of Japanese Buddhism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 78, 105-108n. The second view is that of Waida.

²⁷ *Pace* Matsumae.

²⁸ In the latter story, Amaterasu becomes ill or angry and withdraws into a cave, from which the other deities labor to elicit her. See Matsumae Takeshi, "The Heavenly Rock-Grotto Myth and the Chinkon Ceremony," *Asian Folklore Studies* 39 (1980), 9-22.

²⁹ See, e.g., Asakawa Kanichi, *The Early Institutional Life of Japan: A Study in the Reform of 645 A.D.*, 2nd edn (1903; rpt. New York: Paragon, 1963), p. 34.

³⁰ E. Dale Saunders, "Japanese Mythology," in S. N. Kramer, ed., *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961), p. 433f.

³¹ In certain Oceanian societies, he reports, "the sun is looked upon as the most important divinity" who "can also produce children": "On Timor . . . certain chiefs are called 'children of the sun' and claim to be directly descended from the sun god. We should keep in mind this myth of the sun's creating, and of the direct relationships between the sun god and certain classes of men. This is not a privilege of the sun god alone. . . But in the case of the sun, this genealogy indicates something more: it expresses the changes that follow upon the solarization of the Supreme Being . . . monopolized by certain societies of men or even certain families such as the families of chiefs or kings. . . We find the same sort of relationships in more developed societies, but always limited to the king and noble families. . . Unlike other nature hierophanies, sun hierophanies tend to become the privilege of a closed circle, of a minority of the elect." Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, pp. 133f., 150.

³² See Matsumae Takeshi, "Origin and Growth of the Worship of Amaterasu," *Asian Folklore Studies* 37 (1978), p. 3f., and 1993, pp. 345-346. The form of the honorific suffixes clearly distinguish Amateru from Amaterasu: the *Engi-shiki* lists seven major shrines to "Amateru-mitama," and minor shrines to "Amateru" and to

“Amateru-tama-no-mikoto”; and two major shrines to “Amaterasu-ō-mikami” and a minor shrine to “Ise-no-Amaterasu” (in Chikugo).

³³ After Amaterasu aids Jimmu in conquering the land, she disappears from the records for eight reigns—a purported six hundred years. Finally, she resurfaces during the reign of king Sūjin: at the opening of his reign, she was worshipped in the king’s Great Hall, together with the otherwise unknown “Spirit of the Great Land of Yamato.” Feeling uneasy at having two such formidable forces together in one place, Sūjin entrusted his daughter with Amaterasu’s sacred mirror—the physical manifestation of the goddess—and had her establish a shrine for Amaterasu in a village outside of town (*Nihongi*, 238f.; Aston, 151f. According to the *Kogoshūi*, it was not Amaterasu and a Great Yamato deity that Sūjin kept uneasily, but Amaterasu’s sacred mirror and Susa-no-o’s sword: Katō and Hoshino, p. 36f.). Almost ninety years later, Amaterasu was allegedly taken from the same woman and given to a daughter of Sūjin’s successor, Suinin. This woman, “Yamato-hime,” wandered around for a while looking for a place to enshrine the goddess, though there is no indication as to why Amaterasu could no longer be enshrined in Yamato. Finally the princess arrived in Ise, where the goddess told her to erect a permanent shrine (*Nihongi*, 268f.; Astron, 176f.).

The first problem with this story is that there is no suggestion in the *Kojiki* that any Yamato princess founded the Ise shrine. The two princesses are mentioned in passing there, and glosses say that they served at the shrine of the “Great Deity of Ise,” but the *Nihongi* tale is not present (see *Kojiki*, 178, 188; Philippi, 199, 212). The only mention of Amaterasu by name after Jimmu’s reign is in connection with a fourth-century oracle (*Kojiki*, 230f.: Philippi, 260). Secondly, since the name “Yamato-hime” means simply “Yamato princess,” and cannot be assigned to any known historical princess, it is reasonable to agree with Tsuda Sōkichi that she was fictional. While modern scholars often reject Tsuda’s dismissal of mythic figures, his reasoning in regard to this princess seems sound. Thirdly, there are several anachronisms and historical implausibilities in the tale. First, on her way to Ise, Yamato-hime is said to have passed through several provinces that were in fact named only much later (Bock, *ibid.*). Moreover, it was noted earlier that Amaterasu was in fact never worshipped at court (as the tale says she was in Sūjin’s day), and “the Spirit of the Great Land of Yamato”—abstract and elsewhere unattested—appears to have been invented on the spur of the moment. Finally, we are asked to believe that the first princess lived over a hundred years. Because of these facts, and the lack of any comprehensible reason for the goddess’ removal from Yamato, it seems fairly clear that some courtly authority invented the entire story in an effort to legitimize the later link between Yamato and the Ise shrine. This conclusion coincides with that of Matsumae, 1978, p. 8, and 1993, p. 348; and Bock, I, 27. Cf. also J. M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 33 n. 77.

³⁴ *Nihongi*, 296f. (Aston, 200). Significantly, Ise is not mentioned in this passage. In addition, the *Kojiki* records neither the event nor even the princess who supposedly took part in it.

³⁵ *Nihongi*, II, 390f. (Aston, II, 307).

³⁶ *Nihongi*, 461 (Aston, 337). Mastumae (1993, 348 n. 78) argues that “the first *saiō* as a historical person was probably Princess Sage, appointed during the reign of Keitai (507-531). . . . References to *saiō* serving earlier than Keitai’s reign—in other words, during the reigns of Sujin and Suinin—are probably not based on historical fact.” But he seems to have overlooked the *saiō* appointed in 457, five reigns before that of Keitai.

³⁷ See, e.g., Matsumae, 1978, p. 6.

³⁸ *Nihongi*, II, 154f. (Aston, II, 106f.).

³⁹ Bock reports a legend that “when the Imperial Princess Yamato-hime came to the Isuzu River [the site of the Ise shrine] to set up the worship of Amaterasu-Ō-mikami there the area was already consecrated to a sun-deity, called simply *hi-no-kami*.” Bock, op. cit., I, 27. There is, however, no ancient confirmation of such a legend, and even Matsumae, who accepts the idea of an Ise solar cult predating Amaterasu, dismisses it (personal communication).

⁴⁰ See Matsumae, 1978, p. 9.

⁴¹ Matsumae, *ibid*.

⁴² See, e.g., Yasutada Watanabe, *Shinto Art: Ise and Izumo Shrines*, trans. Robert Ricketts (New York: Weatherhill, 1974), p. 29f.

⁴³ Naoki Kōjirō, summarized by Watanabe (op. cit., p. 81). Cf. Bock, I, p. 29 and n. 66.

⁴⁴ See Watanabe, p. 29f. Matsumae even concludes that the pillar was the original symbol of Amateru (1978, p. 10). Kakubayashi Fumio notes, “While hundreds of rituals have been retained at the Ise shrine where Amaterasu is enshrined, none of them is related to the sun.” But Kakubayashi takes that fact as evidence that the name of the goddess Ō-hirume originally meant “great spirit woman,” and that “later the *hi* was misinterpreted as “the sun.” See “Amaterasu Ōmikami,” in Mircea Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), I: 228.

⁴⁵ I propose that it may have been a local deity known sometimes as Chimata-no-kami, “the god of the crossroads.” The *Kogoshūi* (Katō and Hoshino, p. 38) reports: “Chimata-no-Kami had already settled in Ise long before this Emperor [Suinin] dedicated the Shrine of Isuzu to Amaterasu-O-Mikami.” According to the *Nihongi*, he blocked the path of Hononinigi on his descent from heaven. When confronted, Chimata sent the heavenly grandson to a remote district on Kyushu and himself proceeded to Isuzu in Ise: *Nihongi*, 147ff. (Aston, 77ff.). The implication of these facts is that Chimata had a prior claim to the Ise shrine, a claim so strong that not even Amaterasu’s line could displace him. Such a conclusion harmonizes

well with the worship of the sacred pillar, which was apparently too powerful for the Yamato court either to eliminate or to subsume. A column is a plausible symbol for a god of a roadway or crossroad: Hermes, the Greek god of travel and communication, for instance, originated from roadside cairns known as *hermai*. One grants that no figure named Chimata is attested at the Ise shrine. But I believe that that may be because he was identified at an early date with another deity, Saruta-hiko. Saruta-hiko was a god worshipped by maidens of the Sarume clain, a significant force in the later Ise cult. (The Sarumes' clan ancestor also appears in the cave-retreat myth of Amaterasu, but they are all but unknown in the historical sections of the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*. It would thus appear that their influence dates only from the seventh or early eighth centuries. Cf. Matsumae, 1980, p. 15.) On the assumption that Saruta-hiko was a solar figure, Matsumae conjectured that he was "a primitive form of Amaterasu" (1978, p. 5). But while Saruta-hiko may display solar elements, Chimata-no-kami does not, any more than does the ancient sacred pillar. Still, this entire matter remains highly conjectural.

⁴⁶ *Nihongi*, 189f. (Aston, 110f.).

⁴⁷ The name "Nigihayahi" means something like "Peaceful, Rapid Sun."

⁴⁸ I count about four dozen clans in the *Shinsen shōjiroku* listing Nigihayahi as their first ancestor. A similar figure is given in Andre Wedemeyer, *Japanische Frühgeschichte* (Tokyo: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Volkerkunde Ostasiens, 1930), p. 218f. Kamstra (p. 103) refers to 104 clans, but does not give his sources for such a figure.

⁴⁹ One ancient source relates that when Nigihayahi first descended, he was accompanied by several subordinate deities, and brought down such treasures as mirrors, a sword, and magical jewels. Later, we are told, those treasures were acquired for the emperor Jimmu. All of those elements are strongly reminiscent of elements in the Amaterasu version of the *tenson-kōrin* myth. See Matsumae, 1980, p. 15f. According to the *Jinnō shōtōki* (Varley, p. 73f.), the treasures with which Nigihayahi descended were given to him by Takami-musubi, who was moreover his maternal grandfather. In another ancient text, the *Kujiki*, Nigihayahi is identified with Hononinigi's older brother: see Philippi, p. 531.

⁵⁰ The relationship between the two was most likely artificial. See Numazawa, pp. 189-192. For Waka-hirume, see also *Nihongi*, 114f., 344f. (Aston, 45, 237); and *Kojiki*, 106f. (Philippi, p. 114).

⁵¹ *Kojiki*, 70f. (Philippi, p. 70); and *Nihongi*, 94ff. (Aston, p. 27f.).

⁵² *Nihongi*, 86f., translation mine; cf. Aston, 18f., and the *Kogoshūi*, Katō and Hoshino, p. 16.

⁵³ *Nihongi*, 88f. (Aston, 20).

⁵⁴ *Nihongi*, 107-111, 114-121 (Aston, 36-40, 47-52).

⁵⁵ In most of the *Nihongi* variants of the cave-retreat myth, the name of the central character is not “Amaterasu,” but merely “the sun-deity,” *hi-no-kami*. But in a variant of the cave-retreat myth that mentions Hinokuma instead of Ise, there is a different, and more plausible story: instead of the sun-deity retreating after wounding herself with her weaving-shuttle, “Amaterasu” (who is mentioned only once) hides when “Waka-hirume” wounds herself and dies after having been startled by Susa-no-o (*Nihongi*, 114f.; Aston, 45). There is otherwise no known relationship between “Amaterasu” and Wakahirume, whereas there is a strong relationship between the latter and Ō-hirume. For that reason, I propose that the name of Amaterasu here is a substitution for that of Ō-hirume.

⁵⁶ Historians now believe that Keitai was originally a regional potentate with, at best, a very tenuous relationship to the preceding Yamato rulers. See, e.g., Kiley, p. 40ff. Some historians argue that there was no relationship at all between Keitai and the earlier Yamato kings.

⁵⁷ Tsuda Sōkichi, summarized by Waida, 1976, p. 327f.

⁵⁸ Waida, p. 328.

⁵⁹ Miller, 1974, p. 136-137.

⁶⁰ See Waida, 1973; Ōbayashi Taryō, “Japanese Myths of Descent from Heaven and their Korean Parallels,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 43 (1984), 171-184; and Russell Kirkland, “The Spirit of the Mountain: Myth and State in Pre-Buddhist Tibet,” *History of Religions* 21 (1981-82), 257-271.

⁶¹ See above, p. 115.

⁶² See Bruno Lewin, *Der koreanische Anteil am Werden Japans* (Opladen: West-deutscher Verlag, 1976), especially pp. 32-40.

⁶³ The *Wei-shu*, a sixth-century Chinese chronicle, reports that the founder of Koguryo was miraculously conceived when rays of sunlight struck his semi-divine mother in a closed room. The *Samguk yusa*, a later Korean history, records the same story in a more developed form, as well as a Silla myth displaying solar associations.

⁶⁴ The *Kojiki* (254ff.; Philippi, 291ff.) relates that a Silla woman conceived by sun-light, returned to Japan, her “ancestral land,” and was enshrined at Naniwa. Cf. *Nihongi*, 258ff. (Aston, 166-170). Philippi (422f.) refers also to a Silla tale, in which the spirits of the sun and moon once forsook Silla for Japan. Hence, Philippi and others have concluded that the Korean immigrants of the fifth-sixth centuries brought with them royal ancestral traditions characterized by strong solar themes. Cf. Matsumae, 1978, p. 2f.; and Fritz Vos, *Die Religionen Koreas* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1977), 43-44.

⁶⁵ See Kamstra, 246-264.

⁶⁶ See *Nihongi*, II, 100-105 (Aston, II, 65-68). According to the *Nihongi*'s chronology, the Paekche king sent the image in 552, and many older works cite that date for the formal introduction of Buddhism to Japan. Virtually all scholars

today accept the date of 538. See G. Renondeau, "La Date de l'Introduction du Bouddhisme au Japon," *T'oung Pao* n.s. 47 (1959), pp. 16-29. A critical exposition of current scholarship of the introduction of Buddhism is Sonoda Kōyū, "Early Buddha Worship," in *Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1: Ancient Japan*, pp. 370-380.

⁶⁷ John Whitney Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan 500 to 1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 53. Cf. Miller, 1974, pp. 10-11, 145-146.

⁶⁸ For evidence that both the Soga and their opponents were conscious of the political nature of the Soga advocacy of Buddhism, see Richard J. Miller, *A Study of the Development of a Centralized Japanese State Prior to the Taika Reform* (dissertation, University of California, 1953), pp. 169-171.

⁶⁹ See *Nihongi*, I, 152f. (Aston, I, 81f.). Cf. also R. K. Reischauer, *Early Japanese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1937), II, 39.

⁷⁰ Prof. Matsumae has informed me that some scholars think there were two sets of "Amateru" shrines in the Kansai region, one connected to Tsushima clans and the other to the Owari clan. The Owari reportedly claimed Amateru as their ancestor. According to the *Kujihongi* and a gloss in the *Kojiki*, the ruling family of Tsushima (the Agata-no-atae) claimed as its ancestor Ame-no-Himitama ("the Solar Spirit of Heaven"), who was distinct from Amateru (*Kojiki*, 78f., Philippi, 78).

⁷¹ See note 12 above.

⁷² In 689, the celebrated court poet Kakinomotono Hitomaro composed a dirge for a crown prince, in which the "noble prince" who descended to rule the earth is unnamed, but is called the child of "the goddess Hirume," to whose name is appended the epithet "Heaven-Illuminating One" (i.e., Amaterasu). See Ōbayashi, 174-175.

⁷³ *Pace* Matsumae: "I would conjecture that the story of Amaterasu sending her son Oshihomimi to the earth was told in Ise from ancient times" (1983, p. 172). I know of no evidence to support such a position. According to all ancient versions of the myth of Oshihomimi's birth, he was originally the son of Susa-no-o, and was subsequently adopted by Amaterasu: *Nihongi*, 106-111 (Aston, 35-40); *Kojiki*, 77f. (Philippi, 77). Since the name "Oshihomimi" means "Ruler of the Great Rice-ears" (Philippi, p. 513), he is almost completely parallel to Hononinigi. And since he is otherwise virtually unknown, I surmise him to be a mere reflection of Hononinigi.

⁷⁴ *Nihongi*, 188f., translation mine; cf. Aston, 110.

⁷⁵ Ellwood (1973, p. 65 n. 52) suggests that the idea of two heavenly parents ran counter to a basic Japanese sentiment "that the masculine should be in heaven and the feminine on earth." Matsumae (personal communication) suggests that the female figure had virginal overtones, and that the mythographers were reluctant to compromise such imagery.

⁷⁶ The probability of a political motive for the marriage alliance between Amaterasu and Takami-musubi was suggested long ago by Numazawa, p. 133ff.

⁷⁷ *Nihongi*, II, 132f., translation mine; cf. Aston, II, 90.

⁷⁸ *Nihongi*, II, 140f. (Aston, II, 95).

⁷⁹ Professor Matsumae informs me that some Japanese historians believe the *hi-no-matsuri-be* to have been established within the emperor's palace at Osada. The basis for that conclusion is the notice in the *Engi-shiki* that a shrine to Amateru was established at Osada (Bock, II, 120). But I believe it more likely that the *be* would have been established at an existing shrine. Since the *Engishiki* does list a Himukai ("Sun-facing") shrine on Mt. Miwa (Bock, loc. cit.), Tsukushi Nobuzane proposes that the first royal solar worship may have been conducted there. But there is no ancient textual evidence to support that conclusion.

⁸⁰ In a *Nihongi* variant of the cave-retreat myth, the mirror was identified with the deity of the Hinokuma shrine: *Nihongi*, 114f. (Aston, 47). Cf. *Kogoshūi*: Katō and Hoshino, p. 22. The tradition preserved at the Hinokuma shrine itself says that the sacred mirror was sent to Kii by Jimmu, and was settled in its present location under Suinin: R. A. B. Ponsonby-Fane, *Studies in Shinto and Shrines* (Kyoto: Ponsonby Memorial Society, 1953), p. 191.

⁸¹ Matsumae, 1978, p. 11. Why was the royal cult relocated to Ise? Matsumae suggests that a powerful Kii clan already served the deity of the Hinokuma shrine, and since that clan would have presented competition for the claims of the Yamato rulers, the royal cult shifted to Ise. But the Ise shrine was also under the control of a local clan, the Watarai, and the same reasoning would apply to it as well. Naoki Kōjirō has argued that Ise attracted the attention of the court because of its economic and strategic importance on the eastern sea lanes; when Yamato sought to gain influence there, it found willing allies in the Watarai clan (see Bock, 28ff., and Watanabe, 63f., 81ff.). It is plausible to surmise that the Watarai and the court agreed to inaugurate a royal cult at the Ise shrine while maintaining the indigenous cult (which, as noted earlier, was devoid of solar elements). Such a move would have brought Ise and the Watarai clan to great prominence in the land, while simultaneously bringing the Ise area more firmly under Yamato control. In addition, the *Nihongi* indicates that the Yamato court had initiated a relationship with the Ise shrine earlier, as far back as 457 (see above, p. 119). The relationship seems to have been strengthened under Keitai in the early sixth century. So by the late sixth century, there was plentiful precedent for intensified religious contract between Yamato and Ise.

⁸² *Nihongi*, II, 140f. (Aston, II, 96).

⁸³ *Nihongi*, II, 154f. (Aston, II, 106f.).

⁸⁴ *Nihongi*, II, 148ff. (Aston, II, 101ff.).

⁸⁵ According to the *Nihongi*, a large group of princes and courtiers arose to destroy the Mononobe in a pitched battle. But Stanley Weinstein has argued that such armed conflict was actually unlikely: the *Nihongi* accounts of the introduction of Buddhism (probably composed by the monk Dōji) were constructed to dramatize

the events, and the real conflict was between capital and countryside, not between Shintō and Buddhism. Stanley Weinstein, "When the Buddha Met the Gods," lecture at Stanford University, 24 April 1990. The events of the period in question are analyzed in *Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1: Ancient Japan*, pp. 154-162 (by Delmer Brown), 163-173 (by Inoue Mitsusada), and 370-380 (by Sonoda Kōyū). Both Inoue (172-173) and Sonoda (374-375) characterize the Soga as "an immigrant clan," and the Mononobe and Nakatomi as "Japan-rooted clans." Brown's analysis of the rise of the Soga (160-161) gives no indication of any foreign provenance for the clan itself, though he notes that it "enjoyed wealth and power that flowed from imported techniques of production and administration." Sonoda's dualistic concept of "two opposing clan societies" ("immigrant" and "native": cf. p. 376) is highly redolent of the untenable "horserider theory" (see above, note 2).

⁸⁶ On the civil war of 672, see the analyses by Inoue Mitsusada and Naoki Kōjirō in *Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1: Ancient Japan*, pp. 216-224.

⁸⁷ *Nihongi*, II, 456 (Aston, II, 359).

⁸⁸ See Miller, 1974, esp. pp. 12, 137-138; and Naoki Kōjirō's analysis in *Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1: Ancient Japan*, pp. 221-229.

⁸⁹ Ellwood (101) observes: "Even the oldest stratum of Ise usages reflects a mixture of indigenous and Yamato elements which can in fact be attributed rather precisely to the Temmu period, and whether in the *Gishiki-chō* (ritual book of the Grand Shrine of Ise) or in the present we see nothing at Ise untouched by Temmu's alliance of the Grand Shrine and the Yamato court." Some historians believe that Temmu's powerful devotion to the Ise shrine owed largely to vital support that he had received from that province during his struggle for the throne. See, e.g., Watanabe, pp. 60-63, 83.

⁹⁰ *Nihongi*, II, 390f., 412. (Aston, II, 307, 322).

⁹¹ Manabu Waida reports, "There is general agreement among scholars that the name of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, was established only at the end of the seventh century" (1976, p. 338, citing Tsukushi and Naoki among others).

⁹² *Nihongi*, II, 260f. (Aston, II, 190).

⁹³ See Bock, p. 47.

⁹⁴ Other explanations of the gender of Amaterasu have been proposed. Some have proposed that the deity was identified with Pimiko, the legendary sacral queen of remote antiquity. Others believe that the gender of the Ise deity was changed under the impression of the priestesses sent from the Yamato court (e.g., Matsumae, 1978, p. 7). Still others, like Katō Genchi and Tsukushi Nobuzane, attribute it to the influence of Temmu's wife, the powerful empress Jitō: see Numazawa, p. 214; and Matsumae, 1978, p. 7. Most recently, Robert Ellwood has stressed the influence of Jitō and the subsequent empresses Genmei and Genshō, "strong patrons of Ise." See Ellwood, "The Sujin Religious Revolution," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*

17 (1990), 199-217, at p. 216; but Ellwood seems still to ignore the evidence that “Amaterasu” may not always have been female, though he acknowledges that she was not always a solar deity (206-207). Ellwood’s 1990 article is essentially a revision of his earlier work, “Patriarchal Revolution in Ancient Japan: Episodes from the *Nihonshoki* Sujin Chronicle,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 2 (1986), 23-37.

⁹⁵ The date of this event is not recorded. See the preface to the *Kojiki*, p. 44ff. (Philippi, p. 41f.); cf. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 56-57, 111-112; and *Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1: Ancient Japan*, pp. 511-512.

THE AUTHOR OF *DE DEA SYRIA* AND HIS CULTURAL HERITAGE¹

LUCINDA DIRVEN

Summary

The present contribution deals with the identity of the author of *De Dea Syria*, a second century work that claims to provide an accurate description of the religion in the Syrian city Hierapolis. Despite this assertion the information of DS has often been discredited. This is due to its presumed author, Lucian of Samosata. Since Lucian is known for his sceptical attitude towards religion, it is often concluded that the DS intends to ridicule the cult of Hierapolis. This assertion diminishes the reliability of the DS, since it implies that it contains fanciful and exaggerated information. It will be argued that the content of the DS provides no firm proof for Lucian's authorship. If the work was written by Lucian, he wrote in a style normally foreign to him. Apart from the wish to attribute this work to Lucian, there are no grounds to interpret the DS in the light of his oeuvre.

Instead of starting from a preconceived idea about the author, this article aims to establish his identity by means of the contents of the work itself. Starting point is the allegation of the author that he is a Syrian who personally visited Hierapolis. The information provided by the DS on the Hierapolitan cult tallies with contemporary archaeological material and literary sources. It can therefore be concluded that the account is indeed based upon a personal visit. The author's self-identification as a Syrian is confirmed by the contents and the objective of the DS. On the basis of the contents of the DS its author is best described as a Hellenized Syrian who aimed to assimilate the Hierapolitan cult with Greek culture, while retaining its unique characteristics. As such his account intends to propagate the cult of the Syrian goddess in the Hellenistic world, in all probability especially in Hellenistic Syria.

One of the very rare accounts of Syrian religion in the Roman Period is ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΣΥΡΙΑΗΣ ΘΕΟΥ, better known under its Latin title *De Dea Syria* (henceforth abbreviated as DS).² Potentially the DS is of great value for reconstructing pagan religion in late antique Syria, for it provides a detailed description of a Syrian cult in the Roman period in a way that is unparalleled in other literary sources

of the time.³ Furthermore, it may be the only extant account of Syrian paganism that has no complex history of transmission.⁴

For all these advantages, however, many scholars have been reluctant to use DS as a source on Syrian religion in the Roman Period on account of its presumed author, viz. Lucian of Samosata. Since Lucian is known as a satirist, it has often been assumed that DS is not a serious account of religious practice in Hierapolis and one or two other Syrian cities, but a parody in disguise. As a result, its information has been regarded as suspect.

The present contribution seeks to demonstrate that the value of DS as a religio-historical document has been erroneously underrated. It will be argued in the following pages that there are no solid grounds for the attribution of DS to Lucian of Samosata; like Lucian, its author was a Hellenized Syrian, but unlike Lucian, he was very serious about the religious phenomena he describes. It is theoretically possible that this sincere man was Lucian of Samosata under a temporary spell of devotion, writing a work in manner normally foreign to him. Such speculations would be of limited interest: what matters is that the author of DS should be acknowledged as a man who is serious about religion, having the earnest desire to provide a reliable and favourable account of the cult of the Syrian goddess in Hierapolis.

Lucian of Samosata and the Interpretation of De Dea Syria

Together with 81 other works, DS is currently attributed to the second-century rhetorician and satirist Lucian of Samosata.⁵ The manuscript tradition is unanimous in ascribing the work to Lucian and for many centuries his authorship remained unchallenged.⁶ However, the nineteenth century witnessed a number of attacks on the work's authenticity, so that by 1850 the Lucianic authorship was no longer undisputed.⁷ Lucian's defence was taken with vigour by Jacob Burckhardt. His arguments persuaded Theodore Nöldeke and Franz Cumont, both prominent scholars on late antique Syria.⁸ The majority of Lucianic scholars of the present century have followed their authoritative voices. Recently Robert A. Oden Jr. re-evaluated the

authorship debate, and his influential study decided the question in favour of Lucian.⁹

Resisting the pressure of the majority opinion, a minority of scholars has nevertheless continued to doubt Lucian's authorship.¹⁰ Unfortunately, however, they have failed to give an outline of the cultural identity and intentions of its real author.¹¹ They stress the reliability of DS and claim that the quest for its authorship is of no importance to the archaeologist or historian. The latter point is difficult to maintain, however. If DS was written by Lucian, we have every reason to distrust its information. The usefulness of DS as a religio-historical document hinges largely on the question of its authorship. Although the individual identity of the author may be of little importance, his cultural identity is a serious matter. This cultural identity must be established, not on preconceived ideas about the presumed author, but on the contents of DS itself. What clues does DS provide to the identity of its author?

It must be admitted that the few autobiographical data provided by the author of DS are in keeping with what is known about the life of Lucian of Samosata (ca. 120-180 AD).¹² The author of DS claims to be a Syrian by birth and declares that he has visited Hierapolis in his youth.¹³ Lucian was from Samosata, the capital of the Syrian province of Commagene.¹⁴ Since Samosata is situated about 150 kilometres north of Hierapolis, Lucian may well have visited the 'Holy City' in his youth. The author of DS was well informed about the various Hierapolitan religious traditions and was probably able to communicate with the inhabitants in their native language. Lucian may have had the same ability, for he informs us that "in his youth he still spoke a barbarian language and wore a jacket (*kandys*) in the Assyrian style".¹⁵ DS is written in Greek and its author must have enjoyed a classical education. Lucian left his native city to pursue a career as a Greek rethorician in the cultural centres of the Roman world. Both Lucian and the author of DS are best defined as Hellenized Syrians.

Yet if the details of Lucian's personal life make him a likely candidate as the writer of DS, the style of the book is wholly uncharac-

teristic of Lucian's writings as we know them. The appreciation of religious matters in the DS stands in marked contrast to the sceptical attitude towards religion in Lucian's other work.¹⁶ Satire on religion abounds in Lucian's genuine writings, but many of the items normally ridiculed pass without satirical comment in DS. A few examples may be given in illustration. Whereas non-Greek gods are the object of scorn and mockery in Lucian's *Assembly of Gods*, the non-Greek cult at Hierapolis is described with respect if not admiration. Whereas Lucian considers Egypt to be a land of magic and dubious miracles, the author of DS admires Egyptian religion for its antiquity.¹⁷ The all too human behaviour of allegedly supra-natural gods is a favourite topic in Lucian's writings; to the author of DS, however, Hera's love for the mortal Kombabos is quite natural.¹⁸ Lucian ridicules the punishment of men by the gods, whereas tales of divine anger are a fact of everyday life for the author of DS.¹⁹ The idea that gods dwell in a particular place, whether this be heaven, a temple, or an image, is frequently ridiculed in Lucian's writings; the author of DS, on the other hand, deduces the presence of the gods from their extraordinary cult images; he extols the sanctity of these statues and the temple in which they are housed.²⁰ Lucian particularly dislikes oracles and magic, which he ascribes to human weakness.²¹ His contempt for oracles comes to the fore most clearly in the well-known satire *Alexander the False Prophet*, but is present in his other writings as well. Compared to Lucian's habitual criticism, the neutral account of Apollo's wondrous oracle in Hierapolis would be a conspicuous exception.²²

Defenders of Lucian's authorship have advanced divergent explanations in order to fit the uncritical DS into Lucian's satirical oeuvre. Some have looked for a psychological explanation, ascribing the lack of satire in DS to either the youth or the old age of its author; chauvinism may have rendered him uncritical towards popular religion in his native country.²³ However, the majority of scholars refuse to acknowledge the serious nature of DS; they try to put DS on a par with Lucian's writings by emphasizing its humour. Yet the definition of this supposed humour is problematic. Most commentators have

followed Burckhardt in labelling the work ironic.²⁴ By doing exactly the opposite of what he normally does, that is, by apparently abandoning his usual sceptical attitude towards religion, Lucian would have wished to heap ridicule upon the Hierapolitan cult. This effect would have been enhanced by his writing in the Ionic dialect, which must be seen as a subtle parody of the Ionic revival in his time and of the naive and credulous Herodotus.²⁵ Thematic parallels between Lucian's writings and Herodotus' *Histories* are cited in order to substantiate this hypothesis.²⁶ Some scholars add examples of transparent jokes and puns to prove the presence of an otherwise inconspicuous humour.²⁷

These arguments in favour of Lucian's authorship are by no means decisive. Though the use of the Ionic dialect might theoretically be a parody on its revival in the second century, it is more natural to take DS as an instance of this revival. Nothing proves that the imitation of Herodotus' style is intended as parody. On the contrary, like Arrian's *Indika*, DS can also be read as a homage to one of the first Greek ethnographers.²⁸ The similarities with Herodotus seem intentional, since DS also resembles the *Histories* with regard to themes and subject matter. In this respect DS compares with the roughly contemporary *Description of Greece* by Pausanias. The resemblance of Pausanias' work to the *Histories* is usually explained as the result of its being a guide book with historical, religious, and mythological digressions; the similarity with the *Histories* is due to genre, not to direct borrowing.²⁹ One fails to see why a similar line of reasoning is not followed with regard to DS. Pausanias is as interested in various religious traditions as the author of DS, and neither his work nor DS need be seen as a parody on the 'credulous' Herodotus. Nor are their accounts superstitious or ironic.³⁰ The similarities between DS and the *Description of Greece* are indeed such that the author of DS must be supposed to have been as serious in his account as Pausanias was in his.

The alleged intents of parody call for another comment. Helm rightly remarks that the parodist has a duty to see to it that his audience can recognize his irony.³¹ The preface to the work is the most

obvious place to make such a statement. For example, Lucian points out the irony of the *True Histories* in the foreword to this work. In the preface to DS, however, the author takes the trouble to convince his reader of the trustworthiness of his account.³² Thus the only possible way to maintain the Lucianic authorship is to assume that Lucian presented DS before an audience familiar with his other work, and capable of appreciating a very subtle form of irony.³³ If the irony resides in the intended contrast between a seemingly serious account of religious matters and the overtly disparaging account of human follies in religious matters, everything in DS can be qualified as irony.³⁴ The argument suffers from a vicious circularity: Lucian is a satirist on religion; DS was written by Lucian; DS is serious on religion; DS must be intended as a parody; the irony of DS proves that Lucian was its author.

The presence of humour in DS must be proven on the basis of indubitable cases. Yet the instances of overt humour are strongly disputed among the commentators of DS. Since one's sense of humour is determined largely by cultural and social factors, this difference in opinion is not solved easily.³⁵ Even if the presence of instances of wit and humour should be granted, this would not prove that the work as a whole must be read as a satire.³⁶ It was not uncommon for authors to incorporate a few jokes into a serious work. Humour is a social and cultural phenomenon and this makes it difficult to decide whether DS was funny to the ancient reader or not. The satire of oriental cults was a favourite topic with Greek and Roman authors, and to their audience much of the Hierapolitan cult as described in DS may have seemed ludicrous and barbaric.³⁷ Yet it can only be maintained that DS was a parody on an oriental cult if it is assumed that Lucian was its author; the alleged humour does not prove the assumption about the authorship.

It will be clear by now to what extent the question of the authorship of DS influences its appreciation as a source on Syrian religion in the Roman Period. The arguments adduced to prove Lucian's authorship detract from the historical value of DS. The presumed satirical character of the work diminishes the reliability of its information, since

it implies that the work contains fanciful and exaggerated accounts.³⁸ By ascribing DS to Lucian, the book is turned into a superficial and unreliable account by an outsider. Visiting the city as a tourist with a bias against religion, the author would have missed important aspects of the Hierapolitan cult while misinterpreting others.³⁹ It must be concluded that the value of DS, in spite of its being the most comprehensive source on pagan religion in Syria in the Roman Period, is seriously jeopardized by its attribution to Lucian. Since the authorship of Lucian of Samosata is dubious, it is of interest to determine the cultural identity of the author on the basis of the content of DS.

The Reliability of De Dea Syria

The author of DS claims that his accounts and descriptions are based upon information he obtained himself while visiting the 'Holy City'. This assertion can be substantiated by a wide variety of contemporary literary sources and archaeological remains, originating from Hierapolis, from other places in Syria and Mesopotamia, and from the Greek and Roman world.⁴⁰ In order to verify the information provided by DS, it must be taken into account that these secondary sources are not equally accurate and valuable.⁴¹ Starting from the author's assertion that he writes about Hierapolis, evidence from the 'Holy City' itself is the crown witness. Next, the anecdotes on Hierapolis as related by contemporary Syrian, Roman, and Greek authors must be discussed. Information on the cult of Atargatis and Hadad from Syria and Mesopotamia will be used to substantiate the author's claim that Hierapolis was a centre of pilgrimage for Syria and the surrounding countries.⁴² The cult of Atargatis in the rest of the Greek and Roman world is of no direct importance for our purpose.⁴³ Like most cults detached from their native country, the cult of the Syrian goddess changed under the influence of its new surroundings. It is often difficult to distinguish the old from the new, and the material is therefore best left aside.⁴⁴

Material for comparison from Hierapolis consists mainly of archaeological remains. In the modern city of Membij, very little is

left of the ancient sanctuary of the Syrian goddess.⁴⁵ Unfortunately the area was never systematically excavated. However, archaeologists who have visited the city at the beginning of this century, have remarked on the similarity between the sacred area as described in DS and the traces still visible in their time.⁴⁶ Apart from these accounts, several chance-finds from Hierapolis confirm the observations of the author of DS. Local coinage, known from two periods, is most instructive. The first group dates from the period between about 332-312 BC, when the reigning priests of Hierapolis were responsible for the minting of silver coins with Aramaic legends.⁴⁷ The second group covers the period between Trajan and Philippus Arabus, when the local mint produced imperial coins.⁴⁸

According to DS, the clergy in Hierapolis consisted of a group of over three hundred priests under the supervision of an annually elected high-priest. Only the high-priest wore purple and was crowned with a golden tiara. The regular priesthood wore white robes and white pointed caps (*piloi*).⁴⁹ Reliefs from Hierapolis that depict the high-priest confirm the account in DS.⁵⁰ A representation of a priest on a Hierapolitan coin from the fourth century BC fits the author's description of the common Hierapolitan priest.⁵¹ DS makes abundantly clear that by the second century AD, the Syrian goddess had far surpassed her male companion in importance. The goddess' predominance is confirmed by the prevalence of her image on the city's coinage.⁵² The iconography of the Hierapolitan gods as described in DS finds an exact parallel on Hierapolitan imperial coinage. A famous coin of Alexander Severus portrays the scene of the inner chamber precisely as described in DS, i.e., Hera and Zeus enthroned on lions and bulls, sitting on both sides of the *semeion*.⁵³

The author of DS calls the Hierapolitan couple by the Greek names of Zeus and Hera. However, he does not fail to mention that the inhabitants of the city call Zeus by another name.⁵⁴ The same holds true for the other Hierapolitan gods. The Hellenistic coins with Aramaic inscriptions allow us to establish some of the local names. The image of Zeus is accompanied by the legend *hdd*, "Hadad", or *hdrn*, which is either a mistake for *hdd*, or a Hadad epithet meaning "the

splendid one”.⁵⁵ The name of the goddess occurs as *‘th*, *‘tr‘th* and *tr‘th*, rendered in Greek as Atargatis or Derceto.⁵⁶ According to the author, Hierapolis was not the original name of the city.⁵⁷ Two Hierapolitan coins from the Hellenistic period bear the legend *mnbg* “Manbug”. Manbug is certainly derived from the Semitic root *nb’*, meaning “to bring forth”, “to come out”, from which are derived “source” and “spring”.⁵⁸ Thus the native name of the city confirms the DS account of the prominent position of the chasm or sacred source in Hierapolis.⁵⁹

The important role of the source in the Hierapolitan cult is reflected in Jacob of Serug’s (451-521 AD) *Homily on the Fall of the Idols*.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, Jacob of Serug and other Syriac writers call the city and its gods by their local names. However, most of them only briefly mention Mabbug with regard to other cult centres of Atargatis.⁶¹ More elaborate is the information on Hierapolis in the Syriac *Apology of Pseudo-Melito*, written at the beginning of the third century, perhaps at Hierapolis itself.⁶² The *Apology* contains a long euhemeristic section on the pagan cult of Hierapolis, which undoubtedly is a translation from a Greek original: “The Syrians worship ‘Aty from Hadib, who sent the daughter of BLT a physician; and she cured Simi, the daughter of Hadad, king of Syria.” The *Apology* then relates a long story of two magicians, Nebo and Hadaran, who practised their art near a well at Mabbug in which an unclean demon resided.⁶³ In order to slay the demon, both magicians commanded Simi, the daughter of Hadad, to bring water from the sea and pour it into the well.

Due to the euhemeristic point of view, the information provided by pseudo-Melito is hard to interpret. However, the data are in accordance with those found in DS and the sources of Hierapolis.⁶⁴ Thus the name ‘Aty is the Syrian transcription of the original Aramaic name of the Syrian goddess as attested on Hierapolitan coins.⁶⁵ Likewise, Hadaran, the name of one of the magicians, appears as an epithet of Hadad on Hierapolitan coins from the fourth century BC.⁶⁶ Pseudo-Melito uses the local name Nebo instead of Apollo. Similar in this respect to DS, the *Apology* mentions the magic qualities of

Nebo-Apollo and his relation to the spring in Hierapolis.⁶⁷ In a characteristically euhemeristic way the *semeion* is personified as Simi, the daughter of Hadad. In spite of this personification, the role of Simi is very similar to that played by the *semeion* in the water rite as described in DS.⁶⁸

Like their Syrian colleagues, some Greek and Latin authors are familiar with the local name of the city and its divinities.⁶⁹ Pliny, for example, writing in the first century AD, states that “(the inhabitants of) Bambyce, a city also called Hierapolis, but called Mabog by the Syrians, worship the prodigious Atargatis, who is called Derceto by the Greeks.”⁷⁰ The latter designation of the Syrian goddess fits the account given by DS.⁷¹ Derceto is by no means the only name with which the Greek and Latin authors identify the Syrian goddess. According to Plutarch and others, she was also called Aphrodite or Hera.⁷² Of special interest is Plutarch’s characterization of the Syrian Goddess as a goddess of fertility on account of her intimate relation with water. The account in DS of fish adorned with gold which come when summoned, finds a parallel description in Pliny’s *Natural History* and Aelian’s *On the Nature of Animals*.⁷³ The bearded, seated figure, in the pronaos of the temple in Hierapolis is described similarly in DS and in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*. Both authors state that the city’s inhabitants call this deity Apollo.⁷⁴ Likewise, Macrobius’ description of the statues of Atargatis and Hadad tallies with their representation in DS.⁷⁵ DS emphasizes the immense wealth of the sanctuary in Hierapolis, a claim confirmed by Plutarch, who relates that it took the Roman general Crassus many days to list the treasuries of the goddess.⁷⁶

The author of DS underlines that Atargatis’ sanctuary at Hierapolis was a place of pilgrimage for people from Syria and the surrounding countries.⁷⁷ Syrian literary sources as well as archaeological remains confirm that Atargatis’ cult in Syria and Mesopotamia was influenced by her great cult centre in Hierapolis.⁷⁸ Jacob of Serug notes the intimate relation between the cult of Atargatis in Harran and that in Hierapolis.⁷⁹ The Syriac *Doctrina Addai* explicitly connects the worship of Atargatis at Edessa to that at Hierapolis.⁸⁰ The practice

of self-emasculation, given much prominence in DS, was apparently also prevailing at Edessa, for according to the Syriac *Book of the Laws of Countries* King Abgar felt obliged to proscribe the custom.⁸¹

The influence of the Hierapolitan cult is also apparent from the archaeological remains from Syria and Mesopotamia. The *phalloi* that stood in front of the Hierapolitan sanctuary also formed part of Atargatis' temple at Dura Europos.⁸² In almost every sanctuary dedicated to her—at Hierapolis, Edessa, Ascalon, and elsewhere, Atargatis possessed a pond with sacred fish.⁸³ Atargatis' connection with fish is also reflected in her regional iconography.⁸⁴ Under the influence of the cult of Atargatis at Hierapolis, various local Syrian goddesses and the Arabic goddess Allat took on traits of Atargatis in their iconography.⁸⁵ Likewise the iconography of the official cult statues as described in DS spread through Syria and Mesopotamia. For example, on a third-century relief found at Dura Europos, the divine couple and the *semeion* are depicted in accordance with the account in DS. The similarity is so striking that the relief was probably styled after the cult statues of the Hierapolitan gods.⁸⁶

On the basis of this evidence it must be concluded that a great deal of the information provided by DS on Hierapolitan religion is accurate. We may therefore presume that those elements for which there is no external confirmation are essentially trustworthy as well. This makes DS a unique source for reconstructing the religion of second-century Hierapolis. The fact of its reliability also throws an interesting light on the unknown author of the book. It is to this question that we shall turn in the following section.

The Syrian Heritage of the Author

The verifiable reliability of the information of the cult of the Syrian goddess in Hierapolis is best explained by the assumption that the author of DS did in fact visit the 'Holy City', just as he maintains. What was his country of origin? The author himself claims to be a Syrian (γράφω δὲ Ἀσσύριος ἐών).⁸⁷ This characterization is in itself not particularly revealing, since by the second century AD Syria knew

various cultural milieus, ranging from highly local and traditional to thoroughly Greek and Hellenized. As a Syrian, the author of DS belonged to one of these cultural milieus and the cultural paradigms of his milieu will have determined his perception of Hierapolitan religion. In all probability this is reflected in DS. Thus in order to verify the author's origin, DS should be examined for clues to his cultural milieu.

Many commentators have stressed the Hellenistic characteristics of DS.⁸⁸ Most obvious, of course, is the fact that the account is written in Greek. The use of the Ionic dialect, in imitation of the venerable Herodotus, underscores the work's Hellenistic character. The description of the Phoenician sanctuaries, discussed by way of introduction to the temple at Hierapolis, is in perfect agreement with the Herodotean aspect of the work. The sanctuaries in question enjoyed considerable prestige in the Hellenistic world, a reputation they owed in part to their commendatory description by Herodotus.⁸⁹ The fact that the author of DS gives Greek names to the deities of Hierapolis is also in keeping with the classical ethnographic tradition inaugurated by Herodotus. Finally, in his account of the divergent religious traditions in Hierapolis, the author clearly shows a preference for stories that agree with Greek myths and history. His predisposition is most transparent in his preference for Dionysos over the other founders of the sanctuary, but it can also be seen in his account of the Flood hero Deucalion and the Seleucid queen Stratonice.⁹⁰

Since the Hellenistic features are typical of the accounts of Greek visitors to Syria and the Near East, the conclusion has often been drawn that DS is the account of a man of Greek culture. Because the author of DS claims to be a Syrian, it is assumed that he abandoned his Syrian identity for a Greek cultural identity.⁹¹ However, although the author of DS was certainly influenced by Greek culture, the Hellenistic features do not necessarily imply that he had abandoned his Syrian identity altogether. By the second century AD, various cities in Syria were centres of Greek culture, and the author of DS might very well have originated from one of them.⁹²

There are, in fact, quite a number of elements in DS which point to the Syrian heritage of its author. It is regrettable that the attention to the Hellenistic traits in the work has led to a neglect of the equally or more important 'native' elements. The thread of Syrian self-esteem which runs through DS points to a Syrian as its author. As will be argued below, this self-awareness is expressed in two ways. On the one hand, the author assimilates Hierapolis to Greek culture, thereby making it part of the Hellenistic world. On the other hand, he differentiates Hierapolis from the Greek world and aims to show that the cult in Hierapolis is superior to Greek religion and unique in its kind. Interestingly, he uses Greek devices to illustrate this supremacy. However, he is not an uncritical copyist and refutes contemporary Greek views on Hierapolis and the Syrian goddess that affect the unique character of the cult. As such the DS intends to propagate the cult of the Syrian goddess in the Hellenistic world. Given the Syrian self-consciousness, Hellenized Syrians must have been most receptive to the ideas expressed in this work. Probably they were the audience the author had in mind when he wrote his work

Herodotus' work not only provided Greek and Roman writers with a method to investigate the customs of foreign countries, but also stimulated non-Greek writers who, especially after Alexander, expounded the characteristic features of their own culture to a Greek or Hellenized audience.⁹³ Though some of these writers felt that Herodotus was in need of correction,⁹⁴ the *Histories* did provide them with an adequate model to express their religious patriotism. They followed Herodotus by stressing the antiquity of their religion, arguing that many Greek beliefs did go back to these earlier strands of culture.⁹⁵ The author of DS was apparently well aware of Herodotus' respect for foreign religions. In imitation of Herodotus, he cites the prestigious sanctuaries along the Syrian coast to prove that Syrian religions are older than Greek beliefs, and therefore superior to them.⁹⁶ The author goes beyond Herodotus, however, by his claim that the sanctuary at Hierapolis surpasses the Phoenician temples in sanctity.⁹⁷ It is for this very reason that he describes the spontaneous oracle of

the Hierapolitan Apollo; he explicitly states that he mentions it for its unique qualities.⁹⁸ By copying Herodotus, then, the author of DS invests a Syrian shrine with the cultural prestige of the *Histories*, and thereby brings it within the pale of Hellenism.⁹⁹

The author's *interpretatio Graeca* of Hierapolitan deities and customs does not imply that he was a foreigner. Bilingual inscriptions prove that it was quite common amongst Syrians to identify their local gods with Greek divinities. By the second century AD this practice had spread from the traditional centres of Hellenistic culture to more 'local' cultures, such as Palmyra and Sia (Jebel Hauran).¹⁰⁰ Historians have labelled the Hellenized foundation myths of Hierapolis inauthentic and thus non-native.¹⁰¹ However, despite the fact that these Greek myths do not represent the original Semitic traditions, they may well have been popular amongst the Hellenized people in Hierapolis. In other words, the authentic Semitic traditions should be distinguished from the different cultural traditions that circulated at Hierapolis in the second century.¹⁰²

DS contains several indications that Greek culture had influenced some inhabitants of the 'Holy City'. In all likelihood, part of the population of Hierapolis adhered to the tradition according to which Dionysos founded the sanctuary in honour of his mother Hera, for this is consistent with the attribution of the *semeion* to Dionysos.¹⁰³ The story that the Seleucid queen Stratonice built the most recent temple shows how the inhabitants furnished Hierapolis with a history in accordance with Syria's Hellenistic past. Not all Greek ideas were accepted by the Hierapolitan population, however. Their rejection of the Greek custom of worshipping Apollo as a youth, illustrates their critical attitude and religious self-consciousness.¹⁰⁴

Like the inhabitants of Hierapolis, the author of DS did not accept all Greek traditions with respect to the sanctuary and its goddess. This fact supports the hypothesis of his Syrian identity. The author's interpretation of three Hierapolitan foundation myths (viz. the Flood legend, the tale of Semiramis, and the account according to which the sanctuary was founded by Attis for his mother Rhea) illustrates this point. At the beginning and the end of his account of the Hierapolitan

Flood tradition, the author observes that the Hierapolitan story agrees with the Greek myth.¹⁰⁵ However, the story as told in Hierapolis deviates in several respects from the Greek account and clearly goes back to a Semitic version of the story.¹⁰⁶ The differences between the Hierapolitan version and the Greek myth are so apparent, that it is unlikely that a Greek writer would have made this mistake.¹⁰⁷ In order to uphold the Greek cultural identity of the author of DS (i.e., Lucian of Samosata), it has been suggested that the writer deliberately made this error in an attempt to satirize Eastern traditions.¹⁰⁸ It goes without saying that this explanation presupposes the Lucianic authorship and the satirical character of DS. Once this preconception is recognized for what it is, the argument can just as well be reversed, for non-Greek writers in their turn accused the Greeks of distorting the religious traditions they had borrowed from the East. The best example of this point of view can be found in the *Phoenician History* by Philo of Byblos, a contemporary and fellow countryman of the author of DS.¹⁰⁹ Like Philo, the author of DS stresses the antiquity of Egyptian and Syrian religion over Greek beliefs. His 'errors' in the Deucalion tale may very well have been intentional; they are to be viewed as corrections of the Greek version of the Flood Story on the basis of the Eastern myth.¹¹⁰

The author of DS rejects the tradition according to which the Hierapolitan temple was founded by the Assyrian queen Semiramis in honour of her mother Derceto.¹¹¹ This legend was widespread in the contemporary Greek and Roman world and goes back to a tale related by the Greek historian Ctesias in the *Persica*.¹¹² Unlike his predecessor Herodotus, who thought Semiramis was a historical person, Ctesias deified the legendary queen by making her the daughter of the goddess Derceto.¹¹³ According to Ctesias, Aphrodite incited Derceto of Ascalon to love a young and mortal man; from this improper love affair Semiramis was born. Burning with shame, the goddess abandoned her daughter in a deserted place, threw herself into the lake near Ascalon, and changed into a fish. The future queen was miraculously raised by doves, and after a long and prosperous reign she herself turned into a dove at her death. In the course of

time, Greek and Latin authors identified Derceto of Ascalon with the Hierapolitan Atargatis, and apparently some inhabitants of Hierapolis were familiar with this identification.¹¹⁴

The author of DS rejects the identification of Derceto with the goddess from Hierapolis. This has surprised modern commentators, for both Derceto and Atargatis are Greek renderings of the Aramaic name of the goddess.¹¹⁵ However, the common etymology is not at stake here for the author was well aware that Derceto was one of the names of the goddess of Hierapolis. What he rejects is the assimilation of the Ascalonite Derceto and her locally determined mythology with the Derceto of Hierapolis.¹¹⁶ In order to prove that they are two different goddesses, the author points out their differing iconography. Apparently, he is well aware that Ctesias' story is the ground for the assimilation of the two goddesses, and his counter-arguments show that he considers this to be a foreign tradition.¹¹⁷ He indirectly dissociates himself from Ctesias' account by denying Semiramis' divine nature and thus her alleged descent from Derceto. We are told that the Assyrian queen forced her subjects to worship her as a goddess, but that she recovered from her madness after she was punished by the gods.¹¹⁸ Foreigners were intrigued by the typical Syrian custom to treat fish and doves as sacred animals. From Ctesias onwards, Greek and Roman authors had explained this peculiar tradition by means of the story of Derceto.¹¹⁹ In contrast, the author of DS denies the applicability of Derceto's story for Syria as a whole. The story of Derceto is typical for Ascalon and cannot be used to explain the local traditions of Hierapolis with respect to sacred fish and doves.

The author of DS also discards the tale according to which the sanctuary was founded by Attis for his mother Rhea, i.e. Kybele. Contrary to the other foundation myths that were current at Hierapolis, this legend does not seem to have had many adepts in the city, for the author twice stresses that he heard the account from one learned man.¹²⁰ This intellectual based his hypothesis on the close resemblance between the cult statues of both goddesses, and the important role of eunuch priests in the two cults. To outsiders these similarities must indeed have been striking, and it is therefore not surprising that

Kybele and Atargatis were frequently identified outside Syria. Unlike Kybele, Atargatis' cult was never officially recognized, and a deep distrust of this exotic goddess and her castrated priests prevailed in the Roman world.¹²¹ At best, she was considered a manifestation of her esteemed Anatolian 'sister' and was venerated as such in Kybele's temples.¹²² Contrary to the Greek and Roman assimilation of the two goddesses, DS stresses the unique and locally determined character of the Hierapolitan goddess. Thus the castration rite in the Hierapolitan cult is explained by means of the story of Stratonice and Kombabos, an account which is inextricably bound up with the temple in Hierapolis. The same holds true for the iconography of the Syrian goddess, for according to the author of DS, her image not only resembles that of Kybele, but "also has something of Athena, Aphrodite, Selene, Artemis, Nemesis and the Fates. On the whole, however, she is certainly Hera", i.e.: Atargatis, the unique Syrian goddess from Hierapolis.¹²³

Conclusion

It may be concluded that the author of DS was strongly influenced by Hellenistic culture and tried to bring Hierapolis within the pale of Hellenism. However, this does not imply that he was a foreigner. DS should be read as a patriotic work by a member of a subjected nation who challenges the cultural superiority of the Greeks with respect to the 'barbarian' countries. Interestingly, this assertion of self-esteem is made by adopting the language and arguments of his adversaries. Thus the author assimilates Hierapolis with Greek culture in order to emphasize its unique and superior qualities. His Syrian cultural identity comes to the fore most clearly in his critical stance towards Greek traditions that affect the unique character of Hierapolis and its goddess. The work therefore intends to propagate the cult of the Syrian goddess to a Hellenized audience, in all probability from Syria itself.

The author of DS may be characterized as a Syrian with a Greek education, who consciously clings to the national culture he inherited.¹²⁴

This implies that DS should no longer be read as the satirical account of a man who had espoused Greek culture. Instead, it offers a Graeco-Syrian interpretation of the writer's native religion and culture. As such, it provides valuable and trustworthy information on at least one of the religious and cultural traditions that were current at Hierapolis in the second century.

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² Greek text: K. Jacobitz, *Luciani Samosatensis Opera*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1912). Most recent edition of the Greek text: M.D. Macleod, *Luciani Opera*, Tomus III, 44 (Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxiensis 85; Oxford 1985). Greek text accompanied by a translation in English: A.M. Harmon, "The Goddess of Surrye," *Lucian* (LCL 4; Cambridge, Mass. 1925), 337-411. This translation utilises archaising English, in order to render some of the flavour of the Ionic dialect. A translation in modern English is provided by H.W. Attridge and R.A. Oden, *The Syrian Goddess (De Dea Syria), attributed to Lucian* (Missoula 1976). English translation without the Greek text: J. Garstang and H.A. Strong, *The Syrian Goddess* (London 1913). German translation without the Greek text: C. Clemen, "Lukians Schrift über die syrische Göttin," *Der Alte Orient* 37, 3/4 (Leipzig 1938). French translation without the Greek text: M. Meunier, *La déesse syrienne: traduction nouvelle* (Paris 1980).

³ These literary sources are almost silent when it comes to Syrian myths and rituals and thus DS is the only contemporary source that informs us extensively about these matters. See: H.J.W. Drijvers, "The Persistence of Pagan Cults and Practices in Christian Syria," *East of Byzantium* (Dumbarton Oaks Symposium; ed. N. Garsoian, T. Matthews, and R. Thomson; Washington D.C. 1982), 35-43, esp. 35.

⁴ The *Phoenician History* by Philo of Byblos is an example of an account with a complex history of transmission. Compare below, note 109. On the reliability of Syrian sources in reconstructing pagan religion in Syria see for example H.J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden 1980), 33-39.

⁵ M.D. Macleod and B. Baldwin, "Lucianic studies since 1930," *ANRW* II. 34. 2 (1994), 1362-1421, for further references.

⁶ M. Wittek, "Liste des manuscrits de Lucien," *Scriptorium* 6 (1952), 309-323. The earliest extant manuscript that contains DS (no. 136) dates from the ninth or tenth century.

⁷ A summary of the debate and literary references can be found in R.A. Oden, *Studies in Lucian's De Syria Dea*, (Harvard 1977), 4-14.

⁸ J. Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen* (Leipzig 1853), 182-184. Th. Nöldeke, "Baethgens Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 42 (1888), 473, n. 4. Cumont's choice in favour of Lucian's authorship rests on his correspondence with Nöldeke, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (4th ed. Paris 1929), 12, n. 23.

⁹ The question is re-evaluated by Oden, *Studies*, 14-46. Oden's conclusions are followed by H.J.W. Drijvers, "Book review of M. Hörig, 'Dea Syria. Studien zur religiösen Tradition der Fruchtbarkeitsgöttin in Vorderasien'," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 38 (May-July 1981), 387-391, esp. 388; M. Hörig, "Atargatis," *ANRW* II. 17. 3 (1984), 1536-1581, esp. 1540-1541; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337* (Cambridge, Mass. 1993), 242-247.

¹⁰ Doubts are expressed by R. Helm, "Lukianos," *PW* 13 (1927), col. 1761; M. Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris 1937) 364, n. 63; L. Herman, "L'origine et la date du Dea Syria," *La nouvelle Clio* 10-12 (1958-1962), 246-247; H. Seyrig, "Les dieux de Hiérapolis," *Syria* 37 (1960), 233-251, esp. 238, n. 2; P.J. Morin, *The Cult of Dea Syria in the Greek World* (PhD diss., Ohio State University 1960), i; H.D. Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament. Religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur no. 76; Berlin 1961), 23-25; Attridge and Oden, *The Syrian Goddess*, 2-3; R. Turcan, *Les cultes orientaux dans le monde romain* (Paris 1989), 132; P. Bilde, "Atargatis/Dea Syria: Hellenization of her Cult in the Hellenistic-Roman Period," *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, (ed. P. Bilde et al., Esbjerg 1990), 151-187, esp. 163; M.-F. Baslez, "L'auteur du 'De Dea Syria' et les réalités religieuses de Hierapolis," *Lucien de Samosate. Actes du colloque international de Lyon organisé au Centre d'études romaines et gallo-romaines les 30 septembre-1er octobre 1993*, ed. A. Billault, (Centre d'études romaines et gallo-romaines université Jean-Moulin Lyon III, nouvelle série no. 13; Lyon 1994), 171-76.

¹¹ The article by Baslez, cited in the previous note, is an exception. However, I disagree with her conclusions. See below on the Syrian heritage of the author of DS, especially note 102.

¹² On Lucian's life see: Helm, "Lukianos," cols. 1725-1777, esp. 1725-1728; Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament*, 1-5; C.P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge Mass., 1986) 6-23; E.L. Bowie, "Lucian," *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. Vol. I Greek Literature*, (ed. P.E. Easterling and B.M.W. Knox; Cambridge 1985), 673-79.

¹³ DS §1 and DS §60.

¹⁴ *Hist. Conscr.* 24; *Pisc.* 19.

¹⁵ *Bis accus.* 27. The interpretation is uncertain; βαρβαρον φωνεν, can mean 'foreign language', as well as 'bad Greek accent'. See G. Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie. Essai de monographie historique* (Louvain 1943) 17-19; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 454-456.

¹⁶ Lucian's religious attitude is discussed most extensively by Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse*. Compare also Betz, *Lukian von Samosata*, 24-59.

¹⁷ DS §2 versus *Prom. es in verb.* 4; *Philops.* 34-36; *Tox.* 27. In their theriomorphism, Egyptian gods are even more ridiculous than the anthropomorphic Greek gods: *De sacr.* 14; *Pro imag.* 27; *Iup. trag.* 42; *Dial. mort.* 13-14.

¹⁸ DS § 26 versus for example *Dial. deor.*; *Dial. mar.*; *Deor. conc.* 6 ff.

¹⁹ DS § 12: The gods destroyed the world with the flood. DS § 19: Stratonice fell ill after she ignored Hera's injunction to rebuild her temple in Hierapolis. DS § 25: Kombabos' misfortune was ultimately caused by the goddess. DS § 39: diseases, disasters and sorrows came upon the inhabitants of Syria when Semiramis pretended to be a goddess.

²⁰ DS §§10, 32, and 35-37 versus for example *Ikarom.* 24; *Tim.* 4; *Gall.* 24; *De sacr.* 11; *Tox.* 2; *Iup. trag.* 32.

²¹ Jones, *Culture and Society*, 43.

²² DS §§36-37.

²³ Lucian's old age was proposed by Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie*, 22 and 141. Jones, *Culture and Society*, 41-42, advanced Lucian's lenient attitude towards popular religion in his native country. A. Momigliano, "Roman Religion: The Imperial Period," *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown 1986), 178-201, esp. 194, underlines Lucian's sympathetic description of the cult of the Syrian goddess, which he explains as follows: "Perhaps what Lucian wanted to give us, is in fact, what we get from him—the impression of a mind that refuses to be imposed upon."

²⁴ Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins*, 182; F.G. Allinson, "Pseudo-Ionism in the Second Century AD," *American Journal of Philology* 7 (1886), 203-217; Harmon, "Goddess of Surrye," 337; Cumont, *Religions orientales*, 12; F.G. Allinson, *Lucian: Satirist and Artist* (Boston 1926), 119-120; Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie*, 20; J. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain: imitation et création* (Paris 1958), 653; F.R. Walton, "Atargatis," *RAC* I (1955), cols. 854-860, esp. 854; B. Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (Toronto 1973), 33, n. 60 and 106; G. Anderson, "Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction," *Mnemosyne* 43 (1976), 74; Jones, *Culture and Society*, 42; D.T.M. Frankfurter, "Stylites and Phallobates: Pillar Religion in Late Antique Syria," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990), 168-198, esp. 169-171; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 127 and 247; G. Anderson, "Lucian: Tradition versus Reality," *ANRW* II. 34. 2 (1994), 1422-1447, esp. 1437.

²⁵ Other second-century works written in Ionic are Arrian's *Indika*, Abydenos' *On the Assyrians*, Kephalion's *Historiai* and an anonymous work, *Astrology*, that is sometimes ascribed to Lucian. A summary statement of the arguments against the authenticity of the *Astrology* is offered by Betz, *Lukian von Samosata*, 25. Several Ionic passages in Lucian's writings—*Dom.* 20 and *Vit. auct.* 3—show that he was capable of imitating this dialect. A recently discovered writing by Lucian's contemporary Gallen, proves that Lucian was capable of composing an entire work in the Ionic dialect. Gallen relates that Lucian fabricated a work of Heracleitos in order to expose a well-known philosopher: G. Strohmaier, "Übersehenes zur Biographie Lukians," *Philologus* 123 (1979), 326.

²⁶ For a survey of comparable themes in DS and Lucian's writings see: Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*, 646-648; Anderson, "Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction," 68-78; Oden, *Studies*, 41-42. For comparable themes in DS and Herodotus' *Histories* see: Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*, 649-653; Oden, *Studies*, 20-22.

²⁷ Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*, 647, and Oden, *Studies*, 16-20, list numerous examples. Most authors enumerate only a few. Compare for example Harmon, "Goddess of Surrye," 360, n. 1, according to whom the inscription on the *phalloi* (DS §16) is a hoax.

²⁸ On this ambiguity Anderson, "Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction," 72, and R. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence. Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions*, (Cambridge, London 1989), 158-159.

²⁹ G.W. Bowersock, "Pausanias," *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. Vol. I Greek Literature* (ed. P.E. Easterling and B.M.W. Knox; Cambridge 1985), 709-710; C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley 1985), 95-116.

³⁰ On Pausanias' religious attitude see J. Heer, *La personnalité de Pausanias* (Paris 1979), 127-314.

³¹ Helm, "Lukianos," 1761. Harmon's remark on p. 337 of his introduction to the Loeb translation "The Goddess of Surrye" that: "Lucian counterfeits so cleverly and parodies so slightly, that many have been unwilling to recognize him as the author," nicely illustrates this point.

³² DS §1.

³³ Anderson, "Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction," 73. On Lucian's audience: Bowie, "Lucian," 676-77.

³⁴ Macleod and Baldwin, "Lucianic Studies since 1930," 1394, in reaction to Anderson's "Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction."

³⁵ Put most aptly by Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse*, 363-364. On humour as a social instrument see M. Douglas, "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception," *Man* 3 (1968), 361-376.

³⁶ Contra Oden, *Studies*, 16.

³⁷ Cumont, *Religions orientales*, 11-12, for examples in the work of contemporary writers.

³⁸ This implies that only the facts that are confirmed by other sources are considered trustworthy, cf. Oden, *Studies*, 43-46. Some authors, for example Attridge and Oden, *The Syrian Goddess*, 3, and H.J.W. Drijvers, "Hierapolis (Mabbog)," *RAC* 15 (1991), cols. 27-41, esp. 31, make it appear as if the satirical character of DS does not affect the assessment of the reliability of the account.

³⁹ According to Cumont, *Religions orientales*, 107; Goossens, *Hiérapolis de Syrie*, 21-22; Morin, *Cult of Dea Syria*, iv, the author of DS omits the theology of the Hierapolitan priests. Although many historians of late antique religion in Syria presuppose such a theology, there is hardly any proof of its existence: Drijvers, "Persistence of Pagan Cults," 35, n. 4-6.

⁴⁰ This is acknowledged by most commentators. Recently: Attridge and Oden, *The Syrian Goddess*, 3; Oden, *Studies*, 43-46; Bilde, "Atargatis/Dea Syria," 163.

⁴¹ This is not taken into account by Goossens, *Hiérapolis de Syrie*, 21-22 and 134-139, and Bilde, "Atargatis/Dea Syria," 151-187.

⁴² Local circumstances have determined the development of the cult of Atargatis in various places in Syria and Mesopotamia. For the purpose of this article it is not necessary to discuss this complicated development.

⁴³ Hörig, "Atargatis," 1550-1575, for literary references.

⁴⁴ On the process in general: J.Z. Smith, "Native Cults in the Hellenistic Period," *History of Religions* 11 (1971), 236-249. An excellent example with respect to the cult of Atargatis is offered by her cult on the island of Delos: E. Will, *Le sanctuaire de la deesse syrienne*. Exploration archeologique de Dheilos. (École française d'Athènes, fasc. 35; Paris 1985).

⁴⁵ For the present situation compare Drijvers, "Hierapolis (Mabbog)," 30.

⁴⁶ D. G. Hogarth, "Hierapolis Syriae," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 14 (1907-1908), 197; F. Cumont, *Études syriennes* (Paris 1917), 35-41.

⁴⁷ S. Ronzevalle, "Les monnaies de la dynastie de 'Abd-Hadad et les cultes de Hiérapolis-Bambycé," *MUSJ* 23 (1940), 3-82; H. Seyrig, "Le monnayage de Hiérapolis de Syrie à l'époque d'Alexandre," *RNum* VI^e série, 13 (1971), 11-21, Pl. I, II; Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 86-89.

⁴⁸ British Museum Coins, *Galatia*, Pl. XVII, 8-17; Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 89-91.

⁴⁹ DS §42.

⁵⁰ R. A. Stucky, "Prêtres syriens. II Hierapolis," *Syria* 53 (1976), 127-140, Pl. V-VI.

⁵¹ Seyrig, "Monnayage de Hiérapolis," 16. Recently: J.C. Greenfield, "To Praise the Might of Hadad," *La vie de la parole. Études offertes à P. Grelot* (Paris 1987), 3-12, esp. fig. 2.

⁵² This was already the case in the Hellenistic period; Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 89.

⁵³ DS §§32-33. H. Seyrig, "Bas relief des dieux de Hiéropolis," *Syria* 49 (1972), 104-108, esp. 105, fig. 4; Oden, *Studies*, 160, fig. 2. A provincial tetradrachm very similar to the 'Severus' bronze is now lost and only preserved in a drawing by J. Pellerin, *Mélanges de divers médailles* I (Paris 1765), 17, 189, no. 12. Cf. Oden, *Studies*, 160, fig. 1.

⁵⁴ DS §31.

⁵⁵ Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 86, n. 31. Greenfield, "Might of Hadad," 7 and 10-12, proposed to read *hdd* instead of *hdm*, since the epithet is only found in later texts.

⁵⁶ Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 88-89. In both Aramaic and Greek the name of the goddess is spelled in various ways: Oden, *Studies*, 58-60. According to Oden, *Studies*, 60-73, the name is a compound of 'Aštart, 'Anat, and 'Ašerah. I follow the etymology proposed by Ronzevalle, "Les monnaies," 13; Seyrig, "Monnayage de Hiéropolis," 13; Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 88, according to whom the name of the goddess is a compound of 'Aštart and 'Ateh. In this compound the name of 'Aštart has taken on the generic sense of 'goddess', cf. the use of Ištar in first millennium BC Akkadian texts. Atagatis should therefore be rendered as 'the goddess Anat'.

⁵⁷ DS §1.

⁵⁸ Oden, *Studies*, 29-36; Drijvers, "Hierapolis (Mabbog)," 27.

⁵⁹ DS §§13, 33, 36 and 48.

⁶⁰ "Mabbug. . . A sister of Harran. . . And in their error both of them love the springs." Translation of Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 97; P.S. Landersdorfer, "Die Götterliste des Jacob von Sarug in seiner Homilie über den Fall der Götzenbilder. Ein religionsgeschichtliches Dokument aus der Zeit des untergehenden Heidentums," *Programm des Kgl. Gymnasium im Benediktiner Kloster Ettal für das Schuljahr 1913/14* (München 1914), 13, II. 59-62; 51-53. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 37-38, for further references.

⁶¹ Compare below, p. 14.

⁶² W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum*, (London 1855), 22-35 (Syriac text), 41-51 (English translation). Oden, *Studies*, 127-132, on the identity of the author of the *Apology* and its original language.

⁶³ Seyrig, "Dieux de Hiéropolis," 243.

⁶⁴ Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 93-94. Contra Millar, *Roman Near East*, 243, according to whom the *Apology* only offers further confusion.

⁶⁵ Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 88.

⁶⁶ See note 55.

⁶⁷ DS §36: the oracle of Apollo determines when the *semeion* has to be brought to the sea.

⁶⁸ DS §§13, 33 and 36. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 94-95. A fairly complete survey of all the evidence concerning Simia and related forms: W. Fauth, "Simia," *PW, Suppl.* XIV (1974), 679-701.

⁶⁹ The Greek and Latin literary sources related to the cult of the Syrian goddess have been assembled in P.-L. Van Berg, *Corpus cultus Deae Syriae. Les sources littéraires*, 2 vols., (EPRO 80; Leiden 1972).

⁷⁰ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 5, 19 (77 AD); Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 86.

⁷¹ DS §14. Note that the name Derceto goes back to Aramaic Tr'ṯh, one of the spellings of Atargatis.

⁷² Plutarch, *Crassus*, 17 (ca. 100-120 AD); Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 17.

⁷³ DS §§12 and 45. Plinius, *Nat. hist.* 32, 8 (77 AD); Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 87. Aelian, *De nat. anim.* 12, 2 (222-235 AD); Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 106.

⁷⁴ Macrobius, *Sat.* I, 17, 66-70; Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 119. A statue that fits this description was found at Hatra (Iraq).

⁷⁵ Macrobius, *Sat.* I, 23, 17-20; Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 120.

⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Crassus*, 17 (ca. 100-120 AD); Van Berg, *Corpus I*, no. 17. The event took place in 54 BC.

⁷⁷ DS §§10 and 49.

⁷⁸ The material on the cult of Atargatis in Syria and Mesopotamia is assembled by Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 76-121; Hörig, "Atargatis," 1550-1564.

⁷⁹ Compare above, note 60.

⁸⁰ "Behold there are those among you who adore. . . . Tar'atha as the people of Mabbug." *The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle*, (ed. G. Phillips, London 1876), 23 (translation), 24 (Syriac text).

⁸¹ H.J.W. Drijvers, *The Book of the Laws of Countries. Dialogue on Fate of Bardaisan of Edessa*, (Assen 1965), 58, 20-24 (Syriac text), 59 (translation).

⁸² According to an inscription found in the temple of Atargatis, a certain Ammonius son of Apollophanes had (two?) *phalloi* set up in the year 34/35 AD: R.N. Frye et al., "Inscriptions from Dura Europos," *YCS* 14 (1955), 129, no. 1.

⁸³ Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 79-80.

⁸⁴ The enthroned goddess that is accompanied by a fish on two Palmyrene tesserae is probably to be identified as Atargatis: H. Ingholt et al. *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre* (Paris 1955), nos 430 and 432, Pl. XXII. The famous 'Nergal-relief' from Hatra portrays an enthroned Atargatis with a fish at her feet: H.J.W. Drijvers, "Mithra at Hatra? Some Remarks on the Problem of Irano-Mesopotamian Syncretism," *Acta Iranica Textes et Mémoires* Vol. IV, (Études Mithraïques, Leiden-Téhéran-Liège 1978), 151-186, Pl. XII.

⁸⁵ H.J.W. Drijvers, "Dea Syria," *LIMC* III (1986), 355-358.

⁸⁶ S.B. Downey, *The Stone and Plaster Sculpture*, (Excavation at Dura-Europos, Final Report III, Part I, fasc. 2; Los Angeles 1977), 9-11, Pl. I, 2.

⁸⁷ DS §1.

⁸⁸ Attridge-Oden, *The Syrian Goddess*, 4; Oden, *Studies*, 22-23.

⁸⁹ Millar, *Roman Near East*, 246.

⁹⁰ DS §16, with respect to Dionysos: . . . ἀνδάνει δὲ μοι τὰ λέγουσι τοῦ ἱροῦ πέρι τοῖσιν Ἑλλήσιν τὰ πολλὰ ὁμολογέοντε, . . . The author is consistent in his choice, for in §28 he rejects the explanations on the *phalloi* offered by the inhabitants of the city, in order to attribute the *phalloi* to Dionysos.

⁹¹ Oden, *Studies*, 23-24; Baslez, "L'auteur du 'De Dea Syria'," 176.

⁹² The Hellenistic influence on Syria in the Roman period was recently discussed by Millar, *Roman Near East*.

⁹³ A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom. The limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge 1975), esp. 7-8.

⁹⁴ The Egyptian Manetho, for example, corrected Herodotus' views on Egypt: H.W. Helck, "Manethon," *Der Kleine Pauly* 3 (1979), cols. 952-953. Josephus stressed the antiquity of Jewish beliefs and its superiority over Greek history and religion in *Contra Apion*, esp. 1, 6-28. Compare below, note 110.

⁹⁵ G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1963), 77-78; Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, 3-4 and 142-148.

⁹⁶ The remark in DS §3, that Heracles of Tyre is much older than the Heracles celebrated by the Greeks, echoes the opinion of Herodotus *Hist.* II, 44.

⁹⁷ DS §10.

⁹⁸ DS §§36-37.

⁹⁹ Jones, *Culture and Society*, 41-42; Bracht-Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 158-159.

¹⁰⁰ H.J.W. Drijvers, "Hatra, Palmyra und Edessa. Die Städte der syrisch-mesopotamischen Wüste in politischer, kulturgeschichtlicher und religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *ANRW* II. 8 (1977), 799-905. For the fullest survey on Sia see J.-M. Dentzer, "Six campagnes de fouilles à Sia: Développement et culture indigène en Syrie méridionale," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985), 65-83. The influence of Greek culture on the rural areas in Syria is frequently stressed by Millar, *Roman Near East*. Compare also G.W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1990), chapter 3. For the complicated phenomenon of the *Interpretatio Graeca* in Syria, compare the article by E. Will, "Les aspects de l'interaction des divinités orientales dans la civilisation gréco-romaine: Langage conventionnel et langage clair," *Mythologie gréco-romaine. Mythologies périphériques*, (ed. L. Kahlil, Paris 1981), 157-161.

¹⁰¹ Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie*, 20; Oden, *Studies*, 22-23.

¹⁰² Frankfurter, "Stylites and Phallobates," 171, has stressed the multi-cultural situation in second-century Hierapolis. However, it follows from the DS that the cultural situation in Hierapolis must have been more complex than the author's dichotomy between popular and official religion. The various explanations offered

by the inhabitants of Hierapolis with respect to the religious phenomena prove that several cultural traditions co-existed in the city. In my view, second-century Hierapolitan culture was a composite phenomenon that functioned as an organic unity for the inhabitants and the visitors in their religious practices: Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 17 and 175-177. It is for this reason that I refute the analysis of Baslez, "L'auteur du 'De Dea Syria'," who pictures Hierapolitan culture too monolithic when she states on p. 174 that: "...le religion hiéropolitaine avait gardé sous l'Empire ses caractères sémitiques anciens de culte agraire." Although an interpretation based upon Semitic traditions was current in the city, it was by no means the only tradition by which religious phenomena were explained.

¹⁰³ DS §33. Compare below, n. 120.

¹⁰⁴ DS §35.

¹⁰⁵ DS §12.

¹⁰⁶ This has been widely acknowledged. See Oden, *Studies*, 24-29, for an enumeration of the arguments and references to previous studies.

¹⁰⁷ According to some commentators Lucian of Samosata accidentally confused the Semitic story from his youth and the Greek version: Helm, "Lukianos," 1761; Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie*, 19 and 40-50; Betz, *Lukian von Samosata*, 165; Morrin, *Cults of Dea Syria*, 27-30. I find it hard to believe that a well-educated man like Lucian made such a mistake by chance.

¹⁰⁸ Oden, *Studies*, 24-25 and 29.

¹⁰⁹ Especially in 805: 4-25 of the *Phoenician History*: A.I. Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos. A Commentary*, (Leiden 1981), 10-11 (Greek text), 64-65 (translation) and 77-83 (comment), 267-268 (summary).

¹¹⁰ The *Phoenician History* 806: 25: "The most ancient of the barbarians, especially the Phoenicians and the Egyptians, from whom the remainder of mankind received their ideas, . . ." Baumgarten, *Phoenician History*, 11 (Greek text), 66 (translation), 84 (comment). Compare DS §§2 and 3.

¹¹¹ DS §14.

¹¹² Enumeration of the sources: Van Berg, *Corpus I*, nos. 3-13. Commentary, *idem II*, 13-36.

¹¹³ Herodotus, *Histories I*, 184 and *III*, 155.

¹¹⁴ Van Berg, *Corpus I*, 26.

¹¹⁵ Ronzevalle, "Les monnaies," 11-12, and Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie*, 58, for the etymology of Derceto. See also Van Berg, *Corpus II*, 32; Goossens, *Hiéropolis de Syrie*, 20; Oden, *Studies*, 98-100.

¹¹⁶ Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 84, n. 25, stresses the locally determined manifestations of the Syrian goddess.

¹¹⁷ The author of the DS may be correct in his judgment, for the story was possibly made up by Ctesias: Van Berg, *Corpus II*, 20.

¹¹⁸ DS §§14 and 39.

¹¹⁹ Van Berg, *Corpus II*, 25-26.

¹²⁰ In contrast, the author states that the story of Deucalion is told by “the majority of the inhabitants,” the story of Semiramis by “others”, and the story of Dionyosos by an unspecified “them”. The inferior role of the legend of Kybele also follows from the various traditions with respect to the *semeion*, enumerated in DS § 33. Contrary to the other three foundation myths, the story of Kybele has not determined the interpretation of the *semeion*.

¹²¹ Most famous is Apuleius’ account of the priests of the Syrian goddess in *Métamorphoses* VIII.

¹²² Turcan, *Cultes orientaux*, 139.

¹²³ DS §32. This can rightly be said to be one of the most famous passages of DS. The passage is often cited to illustrate the syncretistic character of Atargatis. See for example M. Hörig, *Dea Syria. Studien zur religiösen Tradition der Fruchtbarkeitsgöttin in Vorderasien*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979), esp. 247-261. Given the context of the passage, the enumeration does not necessarily reflect a syncretistic development of the goddess, for it lists the attributes of her cult statue. It does not automatically follow from these iconographic similarities that the Syrian goddess also adopted other characteristics of these goddesses: Drijvers, “Book review of M. Hörig,” 391. Again, the quest should not be for the origin of the goddess, but for the meaning of the passage in the context of the DS as a whole.

¹²⁴ Contra Millar, *Roman Near East*, 503-522, who doubts that such a consciously Syrian group of people existed in Late Antique Syria. In my view, the assimilation of Syrians to Greek language and culture did not necessarily imply that they completely abandoned their Syrian heritage. The DS illustrates how Syrian culture could be re-interpreted according to Greek standards with maintenance of its local characteristics.

BUDDHIST PREACHING AND SINHALA RELIGIOUS RHETORIC: MEDIEVAL BUDDHIST METHODS TO POPULARIZE THERAVĀDA¹

MAHINDA DEEGALLE

Summary

Buddhist preaching is one of the most neglected areas in modern scholarship. In Buddhist societies, though varieties of preaching rituals are found, existing scholarly literature contains only scattered and often inadequate or misleading references to Buddhist preaching. Since both historians of religions and Buddhologists have tended to ignore the role of Buddhist preachers and preaching in Theravāda Buddhism, this paper stresses the importance of paying attention to 'preaching' in developing a holistic understanding of Sinhala Buddhism.

Focusing on the term '*baṇa*,' this paper examines the development of Buddhist preaching in Sri Lanka. It demonstrates the way *baṇa* has functioned in the popularization of Theravāda since the thirteenth century. First, through an examination of inscriptions, it establishes the development of the term *baṇa* as an important religio-historical category in Sinhala Buddhism. Second, it examines the specific usage of the term *baṇa* in the sense of preaching in the thirteenth century *Pūjāvaliya*. Finally, focusing on the *Butsaraṇa*, an early thirteenth century Sinhala text which contains extensive references to *baṇa*, it examines the way Vidyākavartī innovated Theravāda Buddhist intellectual framework by employing an unconventional term such as '*kāma*' (desire) to describe Theravāda religious concepts in order to popularize them. It argues that Buddhist preaching developed and grew in the context of Sinhala *baṇapot*, and functions as a rich cultural, educational, and religious resource influencing the attitudes and practices of Sinhala Buddhists.

Max Weber remarked that "two types of influences, . . . the power of prophetic charisma and the enduring habits of the masses, influence the work of the priests in their systematization."² Weber pointed out very forcefully the importance of negotiations with the laity in religious establishments. He wrote if the prophet was "to continue to live on in some manner among large numbers of the laity, he must himself become the object of a cult."³ He believed that the teachings of the prophet which were "most appropriate" for a particular

community would survive among the laity through “a process of selection.” In discussing Sinhala Buddhism and preaching tradition, the importance and influence of the laity in the development of doctrinal aspects as well as practices of Theravāda cannot be ignored. Yet, for a holistic understanding of Sinhala Buddhism, Peter Brown’s suggestion is also extremely important. With reference to religious negotiations in Latin Christianity, Brown wrote:

[I]n order to understand such a change [in the cult of saints in Latin Christianity], in all its ramifications, we must set aside the “two-tiered” model. Rather than present the rise of the cult of saints in terms of a dialogue between two parties, the few and the many, let us attempt to see it as part of a greater whole.⁴

It is important to see Buddhist preaching tradition in Sri Lanka from a holistic perspective since such a perspective will provide a comprehensive understanding of religious negotiations in the medieval Buddhist world.

Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhists identify Buddhist preaching as ‘*baṇa*’ (බණ).⁵ This paper examines the development of Buddhist preaching in late medieval Sri Lanka. In this particular case, ‘late medieval’ denotes the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.⁶ In the history of Buddhism in Asia in general and in Sinhala Buddhism in particular, the thirteenth century was a turning point both in terms of doctrinal developments and in the changing geographical shape of Buddhism.⁷ In the case of Sri Lanka, the thirteenth century marks a great revival of vernacular Buddhist literature. Within a little over a century, six important Sinhala prose texts⁸ had been produced for the use of Sinhala speaking Buddhists of the island. These religious classics, known as *baṇapot* (preaching texts), portray a great renewal of popular religiosity among Buddhists who lived in localities around Dambadeniya in Sri Lanka. I will argue that Sinhala *baṇapot* of the thirteenth century have been instrumental in the development of a Sinhala style of preaching (*baṇa*) tradition in Sri Lanka. These vernacular religious classics have provided necessary textual resources and rhetorical strategies for Buddhist preachers. Furthermore, the *baṇa* tradition has popularized Theravāda ideology among peasant lay communities

in Sri Lanka by redefining and modifying Theravāda and thereby functioning in Sinhala Buddhism as a rich cultural, educational, and religious resource for understanding Buddhism.

What is Baṇa?

In the early tradition, although one finds ample references to preaching *dhamma*,⁹ one does not come across the Sinhala term ‘*baṇa*’ or descriptions of devotional practices associated with *baṇa* until the 10th century. In Sri Lanka, the word *baṇa* refers to devotional activities of giving Buddhist sermons. On the basis of inscriptions and literary evidence, I maintain that the term *baṇa* has its origins in Sri Lanka and is distinctive to Sri Lankan Buddhists. Furthermore, I believe that the Sinhala noun *baṇa* derives from the verbal root √*bhan* (to speak, tell, proclaim) and render it into English as ‘preaching.’¹⁰

In the definition of *baṇa* as preaching, I have emphasized ‘public speaking’ and have given priority to the aspect of ‘religious instruction.’ In other words, *baṇa* is *an educational method in traditional communities and a tool in converting human hearts in a variety of different religious communities*. However, the emphasis on ‘religious instruction’ and ‘public speaking’ in this definition of *baṇa* does not exclude or undermine the important religious dimensions which *baṇa* encompasses in Sinhala Buddhism.

In Sinhala Buddhist ritual contexts, *baṇa* encompasses four inter-related devotional activities, among which ‘preaching’ is the primary activity: (1) giving religious instruction, (2) rhythmic reading of a religious text in public, (3) reading a religious text aloud and explicating its content in the vernacular, and (4) narrating *Jātaka* stories with or without an explanation.

In Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhist devotional contexts, ‘reading *baṇapot* (preaching texts) aloud’ is a form of preaching. The texts which are read aloud are written in Sinhala. It is worth noting that Pāli texts are not read in the same way as Sinhala *baṇapot*.¹¹ Two most commonly read *baṇapot* are the *Jātaka Pota* and the *Saddhamaratnāvaliya* (reading the former is more common than the latter).¹²

Sinhala Buddhists would identify such reading activities associated with *baṇapot* as *baṇa*.¹³ Sinhala *baṇapot* writers (for example, Buddhaputra in the *Pūjāvaliya*) claim that they composed *baṇapot* for such reading purposes.¹⁴ Since *baṇa* includes such devotional activities as an important part of preaching, *baṇa* is a ‘fluid’ rather than a fixed category in the sense that preaching is understood in the West.

When a *baṇapota* is read rhythmically, it attracts the attention of the listeners and enables them to understand the story and draw a moral lesson from it. In this context, *baṇa* is not purely an entertainment or an expression of faith of the Buddhists, but an active engagement with religion with a desire to know the Buddha’s teachings; the extent to which the listeners will understand what is heard in the *baṇa* depends on their spiritual and intellectual abilities. In this context, the role of the *baṇa* preacher is to provide necessary resources for expanding the understanding of the listeners.

While the term *baṇakathā* (preaching story)¹⁵ refers to narratives which Buddhist preachers employ in their sermons, a text which includes many such stories is called a *baṇapota*, which literally means ‘a preaching text’ (plural *baṇapot* preaching texts). Since the term *baṇapota* is frequently used to refer to the religious texts used in ritualistic settings of preaching, it is appropriate to translate it here as a preaching text.¹⁶ As a generic term, the term *baṇapota* can be used to refer to any Buddhist scripture whether it is in Pāli or in the vernacular as long as it contains the teachings of the Buddha. In the Sinhala Buddhist context, however, this term has the special connotation of preaching text and thus it is often used to refer to Sinhala *baṇapot*.

The Development of Baṇa Tradition: Historical and Literary Evidence

For an accurate understanding of the development of the *baṇa* tradition in Sri Lanka, it is very important to pay attention to historical and literary sources. They present evidence for an emerging *baṇa* tradition. The term *baṇa* has several centuries of linguistic, inscriptional and historical evolutions within Theravāda Buddhist practice.

First, let me introduce some inscriptional evidence to confirm the existence of *baṇa* in the 10th century. One of three Kaludiyapokuṇa inscriptions (No. 430) mentions the term *baṇa*.¹⁷ This inscription is in the form of a *katikā* (as a set of regulations agreed upon by common consent). First, in line 21, it occurs as ‘*baṇavar*’¹⁸ with reference to “the four lessons of religious discourses” given in three months.¹⁹ In this case, the reference seems to be to the book of *paritta* since it was known as ‘*catubhāṇavārapāli*.’ The same inscription (lines 26 and 28) mentions ten novices who study *baṇa* in that place. While the reference in line 26 specifically mentions ten novices (*dasa heran*), the reference in line 28 refers to novices who study *baṇa* in that place and specifically mentions that they should be ordained (*upasampadā*) as *bhikkhus*.²⁰

In addition, an inscription of Mahinda IV (c. 956-972 CE)²¹ at Mihintale is also important in documenting the existence of the term *baṇa* in Sinhala usage. This inscription presents a detailed description of activities in the monastic complex of Ätvehera (P. Hatthivihāra) in Anurādhapura. In the organization of monastic activities, King Mahinda IV issues orders to provide requisites for Buddhist monks who preach at the *vihāra* (Buddhist monastery).

Mahinda IV’s slab inscription II at Mihintale is extremely important since it has two references to *baṇa*. In the first case, the term *baṇa* is used to refer to the ceremonies related to the rain retreat (P. *vasan*) and the gifts given to the monks who participated in the preaching. The term *baṇa* is used in a very specific sense: it refers to the sermons given at the opening ceremony of the *vassa* season (*vasan baṇa*) and the closing festival of the *vassa* season (*pavarun baṇa*).²² In Theravāda Buddhist countries, it is a common practice that higher-ordained (P. *upasampadā*) monks observe the *vassa* and deliver sermons as religious instruction during the three-month-long (July-September) rain retreat. The end of the three-month-long rain retreat is marked by preaching given at the closing of the *vassa* retreat (*pavarun baṇa*) and the offering of *kāṭhina* robe to the monks who observe the *vassa*.

The second usage of the term *baṇa* in the same inscription is much broader in meaning than the first. The inscription records that the village Gutāgama was donated “to the devotee who preaches the Buddhist doctrine.”²³ In this case, the term *baṇa* is used in the sense of giving sermons on the Buddha’s teachings in general. Further, the preacher seems to be a layperson rather than a monk, since he is introduced as a devotee (*damīnaṭ*).²⁴ Moreover, unlike the earlier reference to the rain retreat ceremony, this one does not make any reference to a specific sermon or preaching activity. However, this latter usage—*baṇa* as a general word for religious instruction in Buddhist teachings—seems to be closer to the usage of *baṇa* in later Sinhala *baṇapot*.

In a twelfth century CE rock inscription (*Mahā Parākramabāhu Katikāvata*), Parākramabāhu I (c. 1153-1186) mentions explicitly the practices related to preaching:

They should spend the first watch of the night engaged in Vidarśanā dhura and in acts devoid of emptiness [*sic*] such as preaching the Dhamma, causing it to be preached, listening to it, committing it to memory and conversing on religious topics and with the arrival of middle watch (of the night) should sleep engrossed in mindfulness and self-possession.²⁵

This inscription records fivefold religious activities related to *baṇa*: (1) Preaching the teachings of the Buddha (*baṇa kiyanu*)—giving religious expositions in public. It is the primary duty of Buddhist preachers. (2) Causing Buddhist scriptures to be preached ([*baṇa*] *kiyavanu*) or sponsoring and facilitating such preaching activities. (3) Listening to sermons given on the teachings of the Buddha ([*baṇa*] *asanu*).²⁶ This demonstrates that Buddhist preachers also acted as audience in preaching ceremonies. (4) Learning the teachings of the Buddha by heart ([*baṇa*] *dharanu*). This demonstrates the importance of bearing of what one heard in the sermon for one’s own practice in future. And (5) participating in the conversations related to the teachings of the Buddha (*dharmakathā kirim*).²⁷ This is a discursive activity where questions are raised and answers are given.²⁸ In late medieval Sri Lankan Buddhism, *baṇa* included all five aspects and thus came to designate a religious ceremony which included a full-

range of preaching-related activities. On the basis of this inscription, it is reasonable to assume that by the twelfth century the term *baṇa* and its associated practices were already established in Sri Lankan Buddhist practices.

From the tenth century onwards, scattered references to *baṇa* found in Sri Lankan inscriptions are indeed very important in establishing an emerging *baṇa*. Yet, in understanding the influence that *baṇa* had on Buddhist practices, literary sources are equally valuable. Literary sources are strong testimonies to support the popularity of the *baṇa* tradition in late medieval period. Among the literary sources, for the first time, in Sinhala *baṇapot*, one finds frequent references. In the thirteenth century, the term *baṇa* is frequently used in Sinhala *baṇapot* to represent a distinctive style of preaching tradition in Sri Lanka. Among Sinhala *baṇapot*, Vidyācakravartī's *Butsaraṇa* (c. 1200-1293 CE) has many references to *baṇa*. On the basis of frequent occurrences of the term *baṇa* in the *Butsaraṇa*, it is possible to argue that the *Butsaraṇa* popularized this newly invented term which until then was found only in the inscriptions. Subsequently, the frequent use of *baṇa* in the *Butsaraṇa* seems to have influenced other literary writers of the thirteenth century; such that they adopted the very term in their writings to refer to preaching situations in Buddhism.²⁹ The use of *baṇa* becomes very common, with the appearance of other thirteenth century Sinhala texts such as the *Pūjāvaliya* and *Saddharmaratnāvaliya*. The popularity of *baṇa* does not seem to be an accident but rather a conscious innovation on the part of Sinhala prose writers and Buddhist preachers to convey the growth and development of a distinctive style of preaching within Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

Vernacular Baṇapot

To a certain extent, after the tenth century unstable political conditions at home³⁰ seem to have isolated Sri Lanka from world affairs. This resulted in the localization of Theravāda Buddhist tradition within Sri Lanka. By around the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Sri Lankan Buddhists started to look 'inward' and to focus

on their local centers. This process of localization does not negate the presence of some Buddhist groups who still had international concerns;³¹ however, there is clear evidence in the Sinhala texts of a new focus on local Buddhist communities and local needs. This is the religio-historical context which gave birth to Sinhala *baṇapot*. In this localization of Theravāda Buddhism, Sinhala *baṇapot* such as the *Amāvatura* and *Butsaraṇa* highlight the renewal of vernacular religious literature and the way these texts fulfilled the needs of local Buddhist communities in late medieval Sri Lanka.

The following statement of the *Saddharmaratnākara* (The Mine of Jewels of the Good Doctrine c. 1417) illustrates the significance of Sinhala *baṇapot* in expanding the textual tradition to the vernacular:

This teaching (of the Buddha) is in the language of Magadha. Since the people of Sri Lanka (*Sinhaladvipavāsi*), in particular, those who are not educated in the language of Māgadhi do not understand it, the celibate Vikramabāhu Mahāsthavira has invited me to translate the Buddha's teachings from the language of Magadha and compose an exposition of the teaching (*dharmaprabandha*) in the Sinhala language (*helubasa*) for the benefit of the world.³²

This paper³³ directs attention to Sinhala *baṇapot* by emphasizing that Sinhala *baṇapot* should be considered as 'Buddhist' rather than merely as Sinhala texts useful for the study of Sinhala language³⁴ or culture. It is crucial to view Sinhala *baṇapot* as Buddhist texts and to take them seriously as resources to know Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the thirteenth century onward. Though Sinhala *baṇapot* are extremely important resources in understanding the development of Theravāda from the thirteenth century to the present, so far these texts have not been 'seen' and 'studied' as Buddhist texts that enhance our understanding of late medieval Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhism. In previous studies, Sinhala *baṇapot* have been used as resources for the study of Sri Lankan culture, but their value as resources for learning about Buddhism has not been recognized. In the past, when Sri Lankan scholars wanted to understand Buddhism in Sri Lanka, they have turned to the Pāli canon, but not to the Sinhala *baṇakathā* literature. Sinhala *baṇapot* are vernacular literary artifacts which show the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. They inform us

about continuities and changes in Theravāda teachings and practices. And their association with the *baṇa* tradition in particular can provide important insights in understanding the continuity and development of Theravāda in Sri Lanka. This change of focus and emphasis will illuminate our discussion in the following pages.

From the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries CE, the literary productions of Sinhala authors are rather astonishing. In this religious renewal, both lay and monastic writers participated in composing texts that were Buddhist in orientation. Within a little over a century, six important Sinhala *baṇapot* were produced for the use of Sinhala speaking Buddhists:³⁵ (1) Guraḷugōmi's *Amāvatura* (The Flood of Nectar, c. 1187-1225),³⁶ (2) Vidyācakravartī's *Butsaraṇa* (Refuge in the Buddha, c. 1200-1293), (3) *Dahamsaraṇa* (Refuge in the Dhamma) and (4) *Saṅgasaraṇa* (Refuge in the Saṅgha), (5) Dhamasēna Thera's *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (The Garland of Jewels of the Good Doctrine, c. 1220-1293) and (6) Mayūrapāda Buddhaputra Thera's *Pūjāvaliya* (The Garland of Offerings, c. 1266). In addition, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, two other religious classics of the *baṇapot* genre were produced—Dēvarakṣita Jayabāhu Dhamakīrti Thera's *Saddharmālankāraya* (The Ornament of the Good Doctrine, c. 1398-1410) and Dharmadinnācārya Vimalakīrti Thera's *Saddharmaratnākāraya* (The Mine of Jewels of the Good Doctrine, c. 1417).³⁷ Considering particular features of this literary genre, as an indigenous category these vernacular religious texts are identified as *baṇakathā* literature. Since none of these Sinhala *baṇapot* are available in complete English translations, most of them are unknown even to specialists in Theravāda Buddhism. However, from time to time, parts of these texts have been published, and have informed the understanding of a few Western scholars of Theravāda Buddhism.³⁸

The Eight Goals of Sinhala Baṇapot—The Pūjāvaliya

Buddhaputra Thera's *Pūjāvaliya*—The Garland of Offerings (c. 1266)³⁹ is particularly relevant to our understanding of the nature of Sinhala *baṇapot*. Among the late medieval Sinhala *baṇapot*, the

Pūjāvaliya is the most explicit and informative text about its expected audience. It shares the authorial intentions of Sinhala *baṇapot*, and goes a step further than the *Amāvatura*. At the very beginning of the *Pūjāvaliya*, Buddhaputra stated that it was composed “for virtuous people who know Sinhala to make it possible for them to cultivate faith and wisdom (*śraddhābuddhi*) for a long time and thereby to enable them to attain three states of happiness (human, divine, and *nibbānic*).”⁴⁰

While considering the *Pūjāvaliya* as an indigenous commentary (Sinhala) on *saddhamma*,⁴¹ Buddhaputra mentions eight groups who would benefit from reading and/or listening to the *Pūjāvaliya*.⁴² These eight groups are extremely important in learning about the audience of Sinhala *baṇapot*. The eight groups ranged from the royalty to Buddhist monastics and ordinary pious lay people.

(1) *The Benefits to Kings*⁴³

There are eight public benefits (*lōvāḍa*)⁴⁴ in producing commentaries and expositions (*arthakathā vyākhyāna*) in Sinhala (*svabhāṣā*)⁴⁵ on the Buddha’s teaching(s) (*saddharma*) that are hidden in brief in the language of the Magadha (*māgadhibhāṣā*). . . . First, I will narrate the benefits that these Sinhala texts provide for kings. Kings engage in various royal duties; they are intoxicated with prosperity; they do not have the opportunity to know either the Buddha’s teachings—that is deep as the great ocean and infinite as the sky—or the greatness of the Buddha. However, from time to time, when they have a little time, they can sit in solitude and can read books composed in Sinhala (*svabhāṣā*). By reading books on the virtues of the Buddha (*Budu guṇa kathā*), they can learn wonderful stories about the teachings of the Buddha (*dharmakathā*) and subtle teachings (*sūkṣma naya*). By reflecting on them (*siṭaṭa nagā*), they can develop wisdom (*nuvaṇa*). By developing wisdom, they can protect the world and the teachings of the Buddha (*lōkaśāsana*); they can engage diligently in the well-being of themselves and others (*ātmārthaparārtha*). (p. 17)

(2) *The Benefits to the World of Women*

For noble women such as queens,⁴⁶ it is difficult to wander around freely according to their wishes to listen to *baṇa*, to worship the Bodhi tree, to accumulate merit, to cultivate wisdom and to know about this and other worlds (*melova paralova*). When they desire, they cannot discuss teachings with the wise⁴⁷ and thereby come to know the teachings. Because of these difficulties such noble

women who know how to read (*akṣara mātrāvak dāna*) can obtain a book like this which explains the virtues of the Buddha and can read it by themselves; thereby, they will come to know the virtues of the Buddha (*Budugūṇa*), will develop wisdom (*nuvaṇa*) and will become involved in meritorious deeds such as gift-giving. In bringing pure prosperity (*abhivṛddhi*), these Sinhala books will benefit the world of women. (p. 17)

(3) *The Benefits to the Deputy King and Ministers*

Noble chiefs such as deputy king and ministers always engage in many royal duties. They do not have opportunity to know properly the Buddha and his teachings (*saddharma*). They are virtuous and worldly (*kalyāṇa prthagjana*). Whenever they have the opportunity, they will read many stories on the virtues of the Buddha. By reading, they will learn laws of the king (*rājanīti*), laws of the world (*lōkanīti*), laws of the teaching (*dharmānīti*), conventions of the world (*lōkavyavahāra*), conventions of the teaching (*dharmavyavahāra*), conventions of land (*deśavyavahāra*), and about this and other worlds. The knowledge gained through reading will help them to work for the king and the world, not to tread on a non-path (*amārga*) and to work for themselves and other's well-being (*ātmārthaparārtha*). (p. 18)

(4) *The Benefits to the Mahāsthaviras*

Mahāsthaviras (elder monks), who are diligent in protecting the Buddhist doctrine (*sāsana*), have received noble posts (*garu vū sthāna*). The preachers of the doctrine (*dharmakathikayō*) who know many teachings and have memorized the teaching (*dhamma*) by heart are reluctant to preach *baṇa* to the *mahāsthaviras* because the *mahāsthaviras* hold important, noble, and superior posts and because the preachers are supposed to respect their superiors (*ādara bahumāna*). Because of these reasons, even for the *mahāsthaviras*, who possess wisdom like earth, it is rare to listen to *baṇa*. Therefore, whenever they receive an opportunity, they will obtain these expositions of the teaching (*dharma vyākhyāna*) and will read according to their wishes. By reading them, they will know wonderful stories in their religion (*āgama*), unparalleled stories of comparison (*opammakathā*), and styles and sentences of previous preachers (*vyavahāra vākprabandha*). In this way, elder monks (*mahāsthaviras*) will awaken their moon-like-wisdom (*prajñācandra*). (p. 18)

(5) *The Benefits to the Meditators*

Monks, who have entered the order of *saṅgha* with great faith (*śraddhā*) but are unable to master the way of reading and writing (*akṣarābhyāsa*),⁴⁸ engage in

insight meditation (*vidarśanā*) and purify precepts (*śīla*). Many of these noble ones (*sabrahmacāri*) bear the character of faith (*śraddhā carita*) and desire to know the teachings (*dharmalōbhī*). According to their wishes, they can read or listen to (*sīt sē balā*) these commentaries (*arthakathā*) and can know the divisions of teaching (*dharmavibhāga*) and precepts (*śīlavibhāga*). Thereby, they will develop wisdom (*prajñā*), will love the observance (*pratipatti*) and comprehension (*pravedha*), and will make the lamps of faith (*śraddhā*) shine. (p. 18)

(6) *The Benefits for Eloquent Preachers*

Great paṇḍits who are eloquent in preaching (*baṇa*), having learnt many discourses (*sūtrānta*) and having read the preaching styles (*vākprabandha*) of previous preachers (*pūrvakathika*) see the need to produce commentaries and expositions (*artha vyākhyāna*). Desiring progress in wisdom (*prajñābhivṛddhi*), being delighted with previous preachers, like soaking perfumes in gold flowers, they will decorate their own rivers-like-power-of-words (*vākpatha*) in their preachings. (p. 18)

(7) *The Benefits for Virtuous People who Give the Gift of Teaching*

Virtuous worldly (*kalyāṇa prthagjana*) people who are able to master the way of reading and writing (*akṣarābhyāsa*), having abandoned wrong (*sāvadya*) activities, thinking to obtain one's and others' well-being, engage in right activities (*niravadya*) by practicing the gift of teaching (*dharmadāna*). Thus they bring benefit to the world. (p. 19)

(8) *The Benefits to Pious Men and Women in Remote Provinces*

Because pious (*śraddhāvanta*) men and women, who live in very remote provinces (*pratyaṇta*), do not have an opportunity to see any virtuous person (*sat-puruṣa*), it is very difficult for them to listen to a *baṇa* and thereby to know about this and other worlds. Therefore, they can obtain a book of this sort which describes the virtues of the Buddha (*Budugūṇa*) and can ask persons, who are able to read, to read them this text (*akṣarābhyāsaya ātiya vun lavā kiyavā*). By listening to such readings,⁴⁹ they can know correctly (*nirvyākula*) the virtues of the Buddha in their own language (*svabhāṣā*). Thereby, they can attain freedom from the suffering of this and other worlds. (p. 19)

For the study of preaching tradition in Sri Lanka, this description in the *Pūjāvaliya* is important in several ways. On the one hand, it presents detailed information about the people for whom Sinhala

baṇapota were produced. On the other hand, it is explicit that the *Pūjāvaliya* itself was written for the use in *baṇa* preaching.

When one examines the above mentioned eight points, it is clear that though the first three segments describe benefits for the royalty, and people associated with royalty, the rest are concerned with describing benefits for Buddhist monks, preachers and Buddhist laity. In particular, the last one is concerned with the religious life of pious men and women in remote provinces. This kind of focus in the *Pūjāvaliya* shows that it aimed at teaching *baṇa* to ordinary people who were marginalized by the traditional Buddhist religious institutions. Within Theravāda tradition, the *Pūjāvaliya* itself has been recognized as a useful manual for preachers.

According to Buddhaputra, thus, eight groups of people can benefit in using the *Pūjāvaliya*; of these eight groups, the last group—pious men and women in remote provinces—is particularly important; they have no opportunity to see virtuous people, or to listen to *dhamma*. Buddhaputra seems to have written the *Pūjāvaliya* with the progress of these marginal groups in mind. Even though these pious men and women are illiterate, they can know the virtues of the Buddha by obtaining a written text like the *Pūjāvaliya* and by having it read to them. By listening in their own language (Sinhala), they may know accurately the pure virtues of the Buddha.⁵⁰

Buddhaputra's religious rhetoric, his remarks with respect to preachers, and his main theme of making 'offerings' (*pūjā*) strongly suggest that he was self-consciously writing a *baṇapota*—a text that would be used in religious instruction. He stated very explicitly that he was writing a text that would benefit both those who read it for themselves and those who use it to preach others.

Baṇa in the Popularization of Theravāda

At this point, let's examine the way *baṇa* and Sinhala religious rhetoric have been used as a vehicle to popularize Theravāda in Sri Lanka. In this section, terms such as 'popular,' 'popularize' and 'popularization' are used in a very broad sense, with reference to

the religious contexts of the average public who are marginalized, as well as courtly figures like kings, queens and ministers. In late medieval Sri Lanka, there was an emphasis on persuading average people about the teachings of the Buddha. Persuasion was used as a strategy in converting people of all socio-economic classes. In this context, popularization means the way late medieval Sinhala Buddhists used narratives to popularize Buddhist doctrines such as *karma* (P. *kamma*), beliefs in heaven and hell, and practices which encourage the pursuit of a path of virtue. Thus, by using the term ‘popularization,’ I do not, in any way, endorse the idea that the preaching tradition is exclusively directed to the “masses.”

In Theravāda popular preaching, since the lifestyles of ordinary lay people have been the center of focus, most narratives have been directed to the religious practices that are relevant to laymen and laywomen. Easy methods such as ‘giving’ (*dāna*), ‘offering flowers,’ ‘taking refuge in the Buddha,’ and ‘the practice of loving kindness’ (*mettā*) etc. have been used as handy and useful methods in converting the hearts of the people. In particular, Sinhala prose writers have chosen more common themes such as anger, jealousy, stealing, lying, and sexual misconduct etc. in narrating the stories. Through narration of stories which contain themes that are relevant to the life of the laity, preachers have emphasized the importance of practicing a virtuous life.

Sinhala writers’ orientation towards the concerns of the laity has to be seen in the context of currency of Pāli texts at the time. In theory, at least, since the majority of monks and nuns had the knowledge of Pāli, they could use Pāli texts and thereby understand Buddhism. However, average Sinhala people did not have any access to the Buddha’s teachings because most of the Buddha’s teachings were in Pāli. In this context, to fulfill religious needs of Buddhist laity (perhaps even some members of the *saṅgha*), Sinhala prose writers may have produced Sinhala *baṇapot*. This becomes further clear when one examines the claims of Sinhala *baṇapot* writers who state so explicitly that they wrote those texts for people who know Sinhala but have no knowledge of Pāli.⁵¹ In this socio-historical context of history of

Buddhism in Sri Lanka, the popularity of Sinhala literature and Buddhist preaching (*baṇa*) can be seen as ways of filling pedagogical gaps that were left open by the Pāli literature.

However, the intellectual foundation that Theravāda inherited from Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* and his other Pāli commentaries is immense. Sinhala tradition's dependence on Pāli texts for inspiration is quite evident from the assertions of Theravāda Buddhists. In vernacular Buddhist texts of medieval Sri Lanka, Buddhist preachers often asserted and emphasized their dependence upon Pāli orthodoxy for inspiration. While depending on Pāli sources, Buddhist writers employed particular themes which highlighted the virtues of the Buddha.

To illustrate the fact that Sinhala prose writers have innovated within the Theravāda intellectual framework to popularize Theravāda in late medieval Sri Lanka, I take one example from the opening paragraph of the *Butsaraṇa*. Vidyācakravartī⁵² has used several important aspects of the Theravāda intellectual framework in the very first paragraph of the *Butsaraṇa* to justify good actions, and to show the importance of taking refuge in the Buddha. This passage gives an impression of Vidyācakravartī's style of composition and shows the way he has used Sinhala rhetoric to popularize Theravāda in Sri Lanka. It is worth noting the way Vidyācakravartī has structured the first introductory paragraph with the refrain of taking refuge in the Buddha:

Knowing the sweetness in pleasure and hardness in pain and desiring to enjoy pleasures effortlessly in the six heavens (*sadev lova*),⁵³ desiring to rest by entering into the city of *nirvāna* (*nivanpura*) which the Buddha, *paccekabuddha* (*pasē budu*) and arahants (*rahatun*) have enjoyed, desiring not to listen to the names of hell (*niraya*), desiring to set aside the thickets of the realm of animals (*tirisan*), desiring to avoid pain in the realm of spirits (*preta*), desiring to uproot the roots of disorder in the realm of titans (*asurakāya*), having affection (*seneha*) for oneself, desiring to ease one's heart with the taste of precious ambrosia (*amārasa*), that is not available at the time when there is no Buddha,⁵⁴ desiring to enjoy the taste of the consolation of heart (mind) while being a human being, which is not available for gods and *brahmas*, desiring not to let happen any damage even to a hair of one's body from the fear of kings and thieves,⁵⁵ etc., desiring to let hearts

rest well against the pains in the *samsāra*, desiring to accomplish successfully (well) whatever job enters into one's mind, desiring to refuse well in advance persons whose company one does not like, desiring to heap up the great ocean like stones, desiring to dissolve the earth into water, desiring a refuge even in the sky, desiring to make stand still the elephants in rut⁵⁶ as drawn in a painting, desiring to transform the poison in snake kings (*nāradu*),⁵⁷ whose angry glance itself is capable of burning into ashes even the Mahāmeru, into ordinary harmless worms, desiring to enjoy coolness in fire, desiring to make friends of enemies, desiring to become pleasant to everyone like the full-moon, desiring to be settled in immortal *nirvāṇa* just by worshipping and making offerings to the Buddha, virtuous people (*satpuruṣayan*) should go for refuge to the Buddha saying 'I go for refuge to the Buddha.'⁵⁸

Here, Vidyācakravartī employs the term '*kāmāti*' in an innovative way.⁵⁹ This verbal noun derives from the root \sqrt{kam} , which means 'desire.'⁶⁰ In general, in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, 'desire' is not considered as a positive quality; it is often seen as negative.⁶¹ Since desire is not a virtue, it can divert one from the path of *nirvāṇa* (*nibbāna*). In the Buddhist context, desire is a sign of craving and thus it is considered a defilement. It is against the religious path, since it causes the extension of the cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*). Vidyācakravartī has employed a concept which traditionally had a negative connotation in Theravāda in a novel way, in order to popularize the Theravāda ideology of heaven and hell among the peasants of late medieval Sri Lanka. All kinds of traditional allusions and expectations are used to justify the importance of taking refuge in the Buddha.

In the above paragraph, Vidyācakravartī mentions several concepts which can be taken as aspects of Theravāda ideology. The doctrine of heaven and hell has, from an early date, been an important part of popular Theravāda religiosity. Though notions of heaven and hell are found in earlier Pāli canonical texts, the way such notions were employed by Vidyācakravartī in the *Butsaraṇa*, in particular, in the first paragraph, is novel and creative. Vidyācakravartī does not give detailed expositions on central doctrines such as *dukkha* but just remind such doctrines in a candid way by stating "knowing the sweetness in pleasure and hardness in pain." This opening paragraph mentions

explicitly (1) the benefit of enjoying happiness in the six heavens and avoiding even listening to the names of hell (*niraya*). The aspiration to enjoy happiness in the divine world (*deva*) is very common among average Buddhists; however, this idea is not distinctively medieval, and has a long history of its own. Vidyācakravartī seems to have appealed to average Buddhists by employing such an ideology at the very beginning of the *Butsarāṇa*. The paragraph as a whole encourages Buddhist devotees to enjoy happiness in the heavens effortlessly. The issue is not just going to hell, but rather avoiding even listening to names of *niraya*. In this paragraph, fourfold unpleasant states⁶² are presented, with the goal of pointing out the immense suffering they contain. In general, in Theravāda Buddhism, notions of hell are a driving force for the practice of virtues.⁶³ Diverse kinds of discourses on suffering in hell, which are important aspects of Theravāda ideology, are intended to persuade ordinary Buddhists to be virtuous; to motivate them to avoid negative actions in daily life; and to encourage them to perform positive deeds with the aspiration of making life better in future.

(2) The desire to enter the city of *nirvāṇa*⁶⁴ is still the ultimate goal of Theravāda Buddhists which is perceived to be attainable in the future. From the ideological point of view of Sinhala Buddhism, *nirvāṇa* is the perfection which Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas and Arhants have realized and attained. In Sinhala Buddhism, these three are the threefold perfections (*tuntarābodhi*) which Theravāda Buddhists are supposed to emulate.⁶⁵ This recognition of the threefold perfections shows that Vidyācakravartī is writing within a Theravāda intellectual framework.

(3) Another strong Theravāda notion is the recognition that *nirvāṇa* is not available at times when there is *no Buddha*. Like the *Butsarāṇa*, the *Saddharmaratnāvalīya* emphasizes the importance of the presence of the Buddha for the realization of *nirvāṇa*, by stating that “the city of *nirvāṇa* filled with noble *arahats* . . . can be apprehended only in the time of a Buddha.”⁶⁶ These remarks seem to represent and affirm the late medieval Buddhist belief that the attainment of religious perfection is not available during the latter day of *dharmma*

when there is no Buddha in the world. This reminder is intended to motivate listeners to take refuge in the Buddha. Furthermore, there is strong assertion of a fundamental Theravāda doctrine, that only human beings have the capacity to change, transform and even to attain enlightenment, because in that respect gods are inferior to human beings. This recognition of human potential is fundamental to Theravāda.

(4) While Vidyācakravartī emphasizes the super mundane experiences as goals to be achieved in this very life, he also emphasizes a great deal the importance of achieving worldly happiness when one lives in this world. Affection towards oneself (*seneha*) forms an important part of this worldly orientation.⁶⁷ The worldly concerns of Buddhists are reflected in assertions of human hopes not to see any damage even to one's hair, to let hearts rest well against the pains in the *samsāra*, to accomplish whatever job enters into one's mind, to be free from unwelcoming company, to experience coolness in fire, to achieve refuge even in the sky (heaven), to make friends of enemies and to become pleasant to all just as the full-moon is pleasant to all.

(5) To achieve all these mundane and worldly goals, Vidyācakravartī recommends relatively easy religious practices such as worshipping and making offerings (*pūjā*) for average lay people. For example, in the first paragraph of the *Butsaraṇa*, Vidyācakravartī motivates people as follows: "Desiring to be settled in immortal *nirvāṇa* just by worshipping and making offerings to the Buddha, virtuous people should go for refuge to the Buddha."⁶⁸ It seems that, like medieval Kamakura Buddhists, such as Hōnen (1133-1212 CE), Shinren (1173-1262 CE) and Nichiren (1222-1282 CE), Sinhala Buddhist preachers of late medieval Sri Lanka recommended relatively easy methods such as worshipping, *pūjās* etc. In the medieval period, these devotional activities may have helped to protect Buddhist communities from external pressure of Śaivism which was felt more severely at that time than in any other period in the history of Sri Lanka.

As I have shown above, inscriptions present first evidence of an emerging *baṇa* tradition within Sri Lanka in the tenth century. In

the following centuries, in popularizing a distinct Sinhala style of preaching in Sri Lanka, the Sinhala *baṇapot* of the thirteenth century were very much instrumental. Employing the Sinhala religious rhetoric of Sinhala *baṇapot*, Buddhist preachers of late medieval Sri Lanka have attempted to convince the public to take refuge in the Buddha. By listening to Buddhist sermons, lay Buddhists learnt values and virtues. In particular, in the peripheral areas of Sri Lanka, *baṇa* became an effective means in communicating Buddhist values. Buddhist preachers used the stories of Sinhala *baṇapot* and Sinhala religious rhetoric in preaching to meet the spiritual needs of the people and created an atmosphere in which Buddhist virtues, values and practices flourished.

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¹ An early version of this paper was presented at the *5th Sri Lanka Conference* held at the Center for the Humanities, University of New Hampshire, USA, August 10-13, 1995.

² Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion* (London: Social Science Paperbacks, 1966), p. 79.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 21.

⁵ Unfortunately, preaching is not an area of study that has been explored even in Sinhala. I have not come across any English publication on Buddhist preaching. Peter Schalk's two articles—"Die Botschaft der friedvollen Lehre (*śānta dharmayē paṇiḍāya*): Einführung in die buddhistische Predigt in Sri Lanka," *Temenos* 19 (1983): 68-111, and "Ohne Denken an den Tod ist kein Leben: Analyse einer buddhistischen Totenpredigt (*mataka baṇa*) aus Sri Lanka," *On the Meaning of Death: Essays on Mortuary Rituals and Eschatological Beliefs*, eds. S. Cederroth, C. Corlin, and J. Lindström (Stockholm: Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology, 1988), pp. 229-255—are the only published articles I have been able to locate that focus on Buddhist preaching in Sri Lanka. Schalk's analysis has been exclusively concerned with modern Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhist preaching in 1970s. Richard

F. Gombrich also has made some references to modern Buddhist preaching in his *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 269-280. Other published accounts in books and encyclopedias are limited to scattered references and allusions. The current status of Theravāda scholarship on this subject is inadequate. A study which highlights the Sinhala contribution to the Buddhist preaching tradition, and examines the growth of *baṇa* as a religious movement of popularizers in the religio-historical milieu of Sinhala Buddhism is very much needed in order to understand Sinhala Buddhism holistically.

⁶ The history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the Polonnaruva period (993-1235 CE) to the end of Kandyan kingdom in 1815 CE can be taken as 'late medieval' period. However, here the focus is on the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries in which several important Sinhala *baṇapot* were composed by monks as well as laymen.

⁷ Note the gradual disappearance of Buddhism from India, its birth place, at the end of twelfth century. While the attacks of the troops of the Turk Muḥammad Ghūri on two major Buddhist universities—Nālandā (1197 CE) and Vikramaśīla (1203 CE)—may have been one major factor of the decline and subsequent disappearance of Buddhism from India, recently scholars have also emphasized internal forces such as the gradual assimilation of Buddhism into Hinduism. Luis O. Gómez, "Buddhism in India," *Buddhism and Asian History*, eds. Joseph M. Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), pp. 94-95.

⁸ See the section on 'vernacular *baṇapot*' for a description of these texts.

⁹ For example, in Pāli literature, one finds terms related to giving religious instruction such as '*dhammakathika*' (preacher of the teaching), '*dhammadesanā*' (religious instruction or teaching on the doctrine), and '*bhānaka*' (reciter of religious texts).

¹⁰ It is important to recognize that the Pāli verb '*bhanati*' (to speak) has a very close relationship linguistically with the origin of the Sinhala term '*baṇa*;' also with terms such as *bhāṇe*. In defining *subhāsita* (good speech), the Buddha states that a good speech has four components. In that case, the term *bhāṇe* is used as *dhammaṃ bhāṇe* (speak righteously), *piyaṃ bhāṇe* (speak pleasant things), *saccaṃ bhāṇe* (speak truth). (*The Saṃyuttanikāya*, Part I, ed. M. Léon Feer [London: PTS, 1884], pp. 188-189.) In this case, the usage of *bhāṇe* refers to speech, and this usage seems to be similar to preaching since preaching has to do with speech. Other Pāli verbal forms, such as *bhāsatī* (*bhāseyya*, etc.), seem to be related.

¹¹ The only exception to this is the reading of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* after someone's death. In this context, a Pāli text is read as a meditation on death and as a reflection on impermanence. The way this *sutta* is read is not similar at all to the way the *Jātaka Pota* is read.

¹² Lama Anagarika Govinda highlights the impact which readings from the *Jātakas* has on the audience as follows: "Up to the present day the *Jātakas* have

not lost their human appeal and continue to exert a deep influence upon the religious life in all Buddhist countries. In Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Cambodia, crowds of people listen with rapt attention for hours when Bhikkhus, during the full-moon nights, recite the stories of the Buddha's former lives. And even in Tibet, I have seen tears in the eyes of sturdy caravan men, when, sitting around the camp-fire, the Bodhisattva's suffering and sacrifices were retold." Lama Anagarika Govinda, "Origins of the Bodhisattva Ideal," *Stepping Stones* 2 (January 1952): 244; also quoted in Gunapala Dharmasiri, *Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics* (Antioch, CA: Golden Leaves, 1989), p. 88.

Referring to the recitation of the *Vessantara Jātaka* at wakes in the Low Country of Sri Lanka, Gombrich writes: "There are men and women who visit such houses and recite the *VJ* in Sinhalese verse for hours at a time until dawn. They sit by the corpse and recite in pairs in very loud voices, chewing ginger or something else to keep from getting hoarse. They are not professional reciters, not organized and not paid; but they and all other visitors are given refreshments, so that the number of nights of recitation is partly determined by the resources of the bereaved. Such recitations also may take place in the week following the funeral." *The Perfect Generosity of Prince Vessantara: A Buddhist Epic*, trans. Margaret Cone and Richard F. Gombrich (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. xii.

¹³ It is worth noting here that this kind of reading aloud is different from *paritta* recitations. *Paritta* recitations are performed in Pāli rather than in the vernacular. *Paritta* is a ritual of blessing and *baṇa* is a ritual of religious instruction. These two aspects should be borne in mind in interpreting the *baṇa* traditions in Sri Lanka. In this respect, Wilhelm Geiger's following observation is also relevant. Quoting Buddhaddatta, Geiger writes that *baṇa* is "'a sermon preached in Sinhalese' (not a recital of Pāli Texts)." Wilhelm Geiger, "New Contributions to the Interpretation of the Mahāvamsa," *Kleine Schriften: Zur Indologie und Buddhismuskunde*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), p. 312.

¹⁴ See the description of "The Eight Goals of Sinhala *Banapot*—The *Pūjāvaliya*" which mentions 'reading' as the primary role of this particular text.

¹⁵ The Sanskrit term '*kathā*' means 'story.' In relation to Buddhist preaching (*baṇa*), *baṇakathā* means 'a story that is used in the preaching.' However, there can be *baṇakathās* which are never used in any ritualistic context, yet such narratives may be identified by Sinhalese as *baṇakathā*.

¹⁶ Though the term *banapota* can be translated as 'holy text,' or 'sacred scripture,' Sinhala Buddhists exclude the sacred texts of other religions from the category of *banapota* by not identifying them with that name. In this sense, Sinhala Buddhist usage of *banapota* seems to be exclusive, as 'scripture' was exclusively used to refer to the Jewish or Christian Bible before 1879. William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 1; Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture?: A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 8.

¹⁷ While this Kaludiyapokuṇa inscription mentions ‘Mahasen Maharaj’ (line 9) as the person who issued this edict, Senarat Paranavitana (1896-1972) thinks that Mahasen Maharaj was either Sena III (c. 938-946 CE) or Sena IV (c. 954-956 CE). *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 3, ed. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 261.

¹⁸ The Pāli equivalent of ‘baṇavar’ is *bhāṇavāra* (a portion of scripture). The term *bhāṇavāra* is often translated as ‘recital.’ (Upali Karunaratna, “*Bhāṇavāra*,” *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 2, ed. G.P. Malalasekera [Colombo: The Government of Ceylon, 1968], p. 690.) One major utility of dividing the Buddha’s teachings into *bhāṇavāras* is that once they are organized that way, they become manageable portions of scripture of usage for purposes of reading, recitation, preservation, transmission as well as for thematic structure. The best known example is the *Maha Pirit Pota* (P. *Catubhāṇavārāpālī*) which is divided into four *bhāṇavāras* for the purpose of recitation.

¹⁹ “(tun) masin satar baṇavar.” *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 3, ed. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe, p. 264.

²⁰ “baṇa hadārana dasa herañ” (line 26) and “mehi baṇa hadārana he[ra]n vat himiyan mahañ karannaṭ maha[sai]gun] givisvā vasāgin” (lines 28-29). *Ibid.*, p. 265.

²¹ This date is from the chronological table of Ulrich von Schroeder’s, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1990), pp. 698-701; also in his *The Golden Age of Sculpture in Sri Lanka: Masterpieces of Buddhist and Hindu Bronzes from Museums in Sri Lanka* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1992), pp. 155-158. I have adopted this particular chronological table in this paper because it is more recent. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe in his chronological table of Sri Lankan kings gives the date of Mahinda IV as 954-970 CE. It is calculated taking into account the Buddha’s death as occurred in 544-543 BCE. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 3, ed. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe, pp. 4-47.

²² “Vasan baṇā ran ek kaḷand satar akak isā pavaruṇ baṇa-d metek-me isā.” (for [expenses of] the opening ceremony of the *vassa* season (*vasan baṇa*), one *kaḷanda* and four *aka* [weight] of gold; for the closing festival of the *vassa* season [*pavaruṇ baṇa*], a similar quantity.) *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 1, trans. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), pp. 94 and 107 (lines 1-2).

²³ “Baṇ-vajārana damīnaṭ isā ādura damīnaṭ isā...mek-naṭ Gutāgama isā.” *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 1, pp. 96 and 111 (lines 38-39).

²⁴ Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe translates *damīnaṭ* as ‘devotee.’ In ancient Sri Lanka, this term has been used to designate an office in royal court and as an appellation of respect. As Mahinda IV’s Mihintale inscription records, its usage seems to include two kinds of duties: the role of a preacher and teacher. Ñānāloka

has maintained that the term *dāmi* was used to identify the preachers and teachers of *dharmma* and that Gurulugōmī, the author of the *Amāvatura*, had been appointed by Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186) as a *dāmi* (Gurulugōmī, *Amāvatura*, ed. Kodāgoḍa Nāṇāloka [Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1967], p. viii). On the basis of inscriptional evidence on *dāmi* and the title *gōmī*, Paranavitana states that Gurulugōmī held “the position of leader of the lay Buddhist congregation.” Senarat Paranavitana, “Civilization of the Polonnaruwa Period: Religion, Literature and Art,” *History of Ceylon*, Vol. 1, Part II, ed. H.C. Ray (Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1960), p. 580.

²⁵ Nandasena Ratnapala, *The Katikāvatas: Laws of the Buddhist Order of Ceylon from the 12th Century to the 18th Century* (München: Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1971), p. 132. “*perā yāmā-da baṇa kiyanu kiyavanu asanu dharanū dharma-kathā kirim ā nosis-piyevin hā vidarśanā-dhuraṇen gevā māndin yāmā sapat sandā sati sampajamāyayen yut nindi seviyā yutu*” (line 36-37). *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 2, ed. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), pp. 271 and 280.

²⁶ The importance that the Theravāda traditions attribute to the acts of listening to the Buddha’s teachings is highlighted in narratives such as the *Dahamsoṇḍa Jātaka*, where the king is ready to sacrifice even his own life to a demon in fulfilling his own aspiration of listening to a single line of the *dharmma* (*Rasavāhinī: A Stream of Sentiments*, ed. Sharada Gamdhi [Delhi: Parimal Publications, 1988], pp. 2-9; *Saddharmālaṅkāraya*, ed. Makuḷudūvē Śrī Piyaṛatana [Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1971], pp. 98-114; *Pansiya Paṇas Jātaka Pot Vahansē*, ed. Nāvullē Dhammānanda [Colombo: M.A. Alahapperuma, 1969], pp. 738-740).

²⁷ Listening to the teachings of the Buddha (*dharmmassavaṇa*) and holding conversations on it (*dharmmasākacchā*) at proper times are mentioned as two of the thirty-two auspicious factors in the *Mahāmaṅgala Sutta*. *The Group of Discourses (Suttanipāta)*, Vol. 1, trans. K.R. Norman (London: PTS, 1984), p. 44, vv. 265-266.

²⁸ Note that Ananda W.P. Guruge highlights the importance of three preaching related activities as characteristic features of early Buddhist monasticism: “The daily life of the Buddhist monastery, ever since its establishment, has revolved around the three activities of *Dhammadesanā*, *Dhammassavaṇa* and *Dhamma-sākacchā*.” The three preaching related activities are: (1) preaching the *dharmma* (*dhammadesanā*), (2) listening to the *dharmma* (*dhammassavaṇa*) and (2) and conversations on *dharmma* (*dhamma sākacchā*). Ananda W.P. Guruge, *The Miracle of Instruction: Further Facets of Buddhism* (Singapore: Samadhi Buddhist Society, 1992), p. 47.

²⁹ For example, Sinhala prose writers of the following centuries such as as Dharmakīrti (*Saddharmālaṅkāraya* c. 1398-1410 CE) followed Vidyākavartī, adopted the term *baṇa* in their writings, and developed *baṇakathā* into a new religious literary genre.

³⁰ The early Polonnaruwa period (993-1055 CE) is considered as one of Hindu rule. It is a historical fact that Sri Lanka became a part of the Coḷa empire due

to the expeditions of Rājārāja and Rājendra Coḷa in 981 and 1017 respectively (W.M. Sirisena, *Sri Lanka and South-East Asia: Political, Religious and Cultural Relations from A.D. c. 1000 to c. 1500* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978], p. 16). Vijayabāhu I (1055-1110 CE) defeated the Coḷas and freed the Sinhala kingdom. However, South Indian invasions were quite frequent in this period. For example, from 1215-1236 CE, Māgha invaded and ruled Sri Lanka (University of Ceylon, *History of Ceylon*), Vol. 1, Part 2, ed. H.C. Ray, pp. 525-528.

³¹ W.M. Sirisena documented political and religious relations which Sri Lanka had with South-east Asian countries from the eleventh through fifteenth centuries. Sirisena writes: "In the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. commercial activities paved the way for political contacts between Sri Lanka and South-east Asia. The relations of Vijayabāhu I and Parākramabāhu I of Sri Lanka with South-east Asia may be understood better in the light of the background of commercial activities in the Indian Ocean. . . . The religious contacts that started as a result of commercial activities brought Sri Lanka and South-east Asia even closer. Interest in Theravāda Buddhism stimulated intercourse between these two regions from the eleventh century onwards." W.M. Sirisena, *Sri Lanka and South-East Asia: Political, Religious and Cultural Relations from A.D. c. 1000 to c. 1500*, p. 1.

³² "*Saddharmaya Māgadhika bhāṣāvehi no hasala Sinhaladvīpavāsīṇa viśesayen no dānena heyin Magadhabhāṣāva parivartanayakoṭa.*" Dhammadinnācārya Vimalakīrti, *Saddharmaratnākara*, ed. Kalapaluvāvē Devānanda (Colombo: Ratnākara Pot Velanda Śālāva, 1955), p. 74. Here Vimalakīrti Thera states explicitly that he composed the *Saddharmaratnākara* in Sinhala particularly because the people of the land of Sinhala [Sri Lanka] are not educated in the language of Māgadhi and thereby do not understand the *saddharma*.

³³ Also see Mahinda Deegalle, *Baṇa: Buddhist Preaching in Sri Lanka (Special Focus on the Two-pulpit Tradition)* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1995).

³⁴ For example, Piyaseeli Wijemanne's, *Amāvatura: A Syntactical Study* (Colombo: Ministry of Higher Education, 1984) focuses on the *Amāvatura* as a resource for the study of Sinhala language rather than for the study of Buddhism.

³⁵ Within three centuries, though several important Sinhala prose works were composed, in this paper, not all of them have been included in the category of *baṇapot*. The selection of eight *baṇapot* is based on an examination of genre, language, and the nature of particular texts—whether they are direct translations, commentaries, or glossaries.

Sinhala Jātaka Pota (c. 1303-1333) is obviously an important and influential *baṇapota*. Because of its importance for Sri Lankan Buddhist religious practices, it has been discussed in several places. Yet, it has been excluded from this list of *baṇapot* since it was a direct translation of *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*. For similar reasons, chronicles such as *Sinhala Thūpavaṃśaya* (c. 1293-1303), *Sinhala Bodhivaṃśaya*

(c. 1303-1333), *Daḷadā Sirita* (c. 1325), and *Dharmapradīpikāva* (c. 1187-1225) have been excluded from this examination.

³⁶ Note that Godakumbura gives a rather improbable date to the *Amāvatura* as an eleventh century text. C.E. Godakumbura, *Literature of Sri Lanka*, p. 15.

³⁷ These dates are from Puñci Baṇḍāra Sannasgala, *Siṃhala Sāhitya Vaṃśaya* (Colombo: Lakehouse Press, 1964) and C.H.B. Reynolds, *An Anthology of Sinhalese Literature up to 1815* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1970).

A word on dating Sinhala *banapot* is due. There is no adequate chronological table for dating Sinhala texts. I have heavily relied on Puñci Baṇḍāra Sannasgala's, *Siṃhala Sāhitya Vaṃśaya*. He uses the chronological table of Sri Lankan kings given by the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 3, ed. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe, pp. 4-46. Senarat Paranavitana has revised some dates given in the volume 3 of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* [Mahāsena (275-301 CE) through Mahinda V (982-1029 CE)], in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 5, ed. S. Paranavitana (Colombo: The Archaeological Department, 1955), pp. 109-111. University of Ceylon, *History of Ceylon*, Vol. 1, Part 2, ed. H.C. Ray (Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1960), pp. 843-847 also provides a chronological table from Vijaya to Parākramabāhu VIII (1477-1489 CE).

Since Schroeder's chronological table of the kings of Sri Lanka is the most complete and revised dating system available today, I will use it throughout this paper. Ulrich von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1990), pp. 698-701.

³⁸ I will mention a few such contributions which have expanded scholars' understanding of Sinhala Buddhism. First, Robert Spence Hardy (1803-1868) who spent over twenty years as a Wesleyan missionary in Sri Lanka, wrote *A Manual of Buddhism: In Its Modern Development* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1967. First published in 1853). In writing this book, Hardy used 465 manuscripts, 150 of them Sinhala manuscripts. It took over a century for the second important contribution regarding Sinhala prose and verse texts to appear. In 1970, C.H.B. Reynolds introduced a few chapters from twenty-two Sinhala literary works of diverse genres ranging from the fifth century to the end of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815 (C.H.B. Reynolds, *An Anthology of Sinhalese Literature up to 1815* [London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1970]). This gives a flavor of Sinhala literature and an idea of theme and content of Buddhist writers. Until this publication, not even sections of Sinhala *banapot* were available in English translations. The most recent path-breaking contribution is Ranjini Obeyesekere's *Jewels of the Doctrine*, in which she has translated fifteen stories out of the 345 chapters of the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (13th c.) (Dharmasēna Thera, *Jewels of the Doctrine: Stories of the Saddharma Ratnāvaliya*, trans. Ranjini Obeyesekere (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991). The *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* is a large text. While Kiriāllē Nāṇavimala's

Sinhala edition of the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1971) consists of 1236 pages, the two-volume University of Colombo edition (Colombo: Sri Lanka Oriental Languages Association, 1985-1986) has 863 pages. Two other important contributions are C.E. Godakumbura's *Sinhalese Literature* (Colombo: The Colombo Apothecaries' Co., 1955) and M.B. Ariyapala's *Society in Medieval Ceylon: The State of Society in Ceylon as depicted in the Saddharma-ratnāvaliya and other Literature of the Thirteenth Century* (Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1968). Given the vast literary corpus of Sinhala literature, there are only very minor resources that are available to an English reader.

³⁹ Nāṇavimala maintains that Buddhaputra Thera wrote the *Pūjāvaliya* in 1266-1275 CE. (Mayūrapāda Buddhaputra, *Pūjāvaliya*, ed. Kiriāllē Nāṇavimala, p. 1.) However, E. Hector Perera gives 1226 as the date of the *Pūjāvaliya*. (E. Hector Perera, "Amāvatura," *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 1, ed. G.P. Malalasekera [Colombo: The Government of Ceylon, 1964], pp. 415).

⁴⁰ "Siṃhala bhāṣāva dannā satpuruṣa janayaṅgē bohō kal śraddhābuddhi janana ya karavā trividha vū sampat sādādena piṇisa." Mayūrapāda Buddhaputra, *Pūjāvaliya*, ed. Kiriāllē Nāṇavimala, p. 13.

⁴¹ Buddhaputra Thera mentions that *saddharma* is in the Māgadhi language (*māgadhibhāṣā*) and it is still in brief format (*saṃkṣepayan*), and hidden (*sāṅgavī tibū*, p. 17). His purpose seems to be to reveal the hidden treasures and to elaborate on hidden *dhamma*.

⁴² Mayūrapāda Buddhaputra, *Pūjāvaliya*, ed. Kiriāllē Nāṇavimala, pp. 17-19.

⁴³ Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from Sinhala originals are mine.

⁴⁴ All foreign terms within parenthesis are from Sinhala language.

⁴⁵ 'Svabhāṣā' means one's own language = Sinhala.

⁴⁶ This is an indication that women formed an important part of the Buddhist community which participated in the *baṇa*. The references in the *Pūjāvaliya* show that women participated in the *baṇa* and that such rituals were not limited only to the women of the royal family. For example, the eighth point here proves that even average women, in remote provinces, were enabled to participate in the *baṇa* (*no ek pratyantavala . . . śraddhāvanta vū strī puruṣayaṇṭa baṇa asā*, p. 19). These literary references give the impression of an inclusive Buddhist community (men as well as women; royal women as well as ordinary women) who participated in the *baṇa* rituals.

⁴⁷ This gives the impression that even the queens had no access to the wise (*nuvanāṭiyan*). It indicates that, in general, women had fewer opportunities to study texts, discuss with the wise, and receive an education. Perhaps, even the wise may have been reluctant to discuss the teachings with them because they were queens—a cause of possible danger of king's anger to the wise. However, it is not clear here whether the term *nuvanāṭiyan* refers to wise Buddhist monks or wise laymen. If it referred to Buddhist monks, then it can be understood in terms of disciplinary

rules for Buddhist monks which state that a monk should not discuss things with women alone in secluded places. This *vinaya* rule seems to have been observed at the beginning of the late medieval period in Sri Lanka since the Pollonnaruwa Galvihāra rock inscription of Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186 CE) mentions that monks should not talk alone even with ones's own mother because, in general, women are considered as members of "the poisonous half" (*viṣabhāga*). (*"mavunudu vuva vi(ṣa)bhāgayan hā-da . . . (rahas-hi) no-biṇiyā yutu . . . viṣabhāga kathā-da no-kaṭa yutu."* *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 2, ed. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe, p. 272, lines 39, 44.) Thus, in this case, if this particular term meant wise Buddhist monks, then we can assume that the *baṇapot* were written to solve such problems and provide more opportunities to women to participate in religious activities. For a detailed and thorough historical investigation of the role of Theravāda nuns in Sri Lanka, see R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, "Subtle Silks of Ferreous Firmness: Buddhist Nuns in Ancient and Early Medieval Sri Lanka and their Role in the Propagation of Buddhism," *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* 14 (No. 1 & 2) 1988 (published in 1990): 1-59.

⁴⁸ Buddhaputra Thera here suggests that even among the Buddhist *saṅgha* there were some who could not read (*ati śraddhāven mahāṇa va akṣarābhyāsaya koṭa gata nohī vidarsanāvehi yedī*). Such monastics, according to him, can know the teachings of the Buddha by listening to the readings of the *Pūjāvaliya*. This could be a reference to two divisions of the *saṅgha*—those who practice the way of learning books (*granthadhura*) and those who practice the way of insight meditation (*vidarśanādhura*).

⁴⁹ This is a further proof that 'listening' to religious texts was a common practice in the thirteenth century. Perhaps, such listeners were unable to read yet they listened. With the production of *baṇapot*, thus, even illiterates can know the Buddha's teachings (*dhamma*) through listening to *baṇa*. The *Saddharmaratnākara* illustrates this more convincingly by stating that people who are unable to read can invite a person who is capable of reading texts to their residences and holding a reading session of a *baṇapota* (*palaṅga nāgihiṇḍa baṇa kiyan taram bahuśrutaśabdaññaprajñavarayan hāmatanhi lābagānma durlabha vuvat śraddhā āti va baṇa asanu kāmāti nirdhanasu-janayan viṣin tamatamangē abhiprāyānukūla lesa vasana svakīyasthānavaḷaṭa akuru pamanak dannā kenakun genvā geṇa abhiprāya lesa bana asā*). (Dhammadinnācārya Vimalakīrti, *Saddharmaratnākara*, ed. Kalapaluvāvē Devānanda, pp. 74-75.) Similar remarks by medieval writers show that the medieval Sinhala *baṇapot* attempted to narrate the teachings of the Buddha even to illiterates.

⁵⁰ The *Pūjāvaliya*'s emphasis on pious people who live in remote provinces (*pratyanta*) is extremely significant when one compares it with a statement with regard to people who do not see the future Buddha Maitreya (Metteyya). One Sinhala palm-leaf manuscript—The *Vērañjasūtrānumodanāva*—in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, maintains that people

who are born in *pratyantajanapada* are not able to see the future Buddha Maitreya (PLMS No. 43836, f5b5). Though it does not explain why this is the case, one could infer that people who live in remote provinces do not have an opportunity either to see virtuous people (*satpuruṣa*) or to know the *dhamma* by listening to the Buddha's teachings. In particular, the idea that people who live in remote provinces do not have access to Buddhist teachings may have motivated the author of The *Vērañjasūtrānumodanāva* to state that people who live in remote provinces do not see the future Buddha Maitreya. It is important to note that the *Purāṇa Sinhala Baṇapota* also states explicitly that people in remote provinces are not able to listen to the Buddha's teachings: "One cannot listen to such greatly beneficial *sad-dharma* when one is born in hells such as *naraka*, in formless sphere, in the sphere of unconsciousness (*asañña*), in remote provinces, at the time when the Buddhas are not born, or when one is born blind (*jātyanda*), or having taken false view (*mityādrṣṭi*)."⁵¹ (*Purāṇa Sinhala Baṇapota*, ed. Jinavaradharmakīrti Śrī Ratanapāla [Colombo: Mahābodhi Yantrālaya, 1929], p. 15). On the contrary to this inadequate availability of religious resources, Buddhaputra Thera in the *Pūjāvaliya* attempts to fulfil the spiritual needs of people in remote provinces who are neglected and deprived of practicing a religious life because of lack of Sinhala commentaries and preachers.

⁵¹ See the comment of Dhammadinnācārya Vimalakīrti Thera, the author of the *Saddharmaratnākara*, on p. 11. Furthermore, the *Pūjāvaliya* also states that it was written "for virtuous people who know Sinhala." Mayūrapāda Buddhaputra Thera, *Pūjāvaliya*, ed. Kiriālle Nāṇavimala, p. 13.

⁵² Vidyācakravartī is believed to be a Buddhist layman. Vidyācakravartī's faith in the Buddha and his commitment to the generation of faith and devotion (*bhakti*) among Sinhala readers are well expressed in the text, in the form of summaries of Buddha's virtues. The *Butsarāṇa* has four-hundred-seventy-eight paragraphs which end with the refrain "*satpuruṣayan viśin 'Budun saraṇa yemi' yi Butsarāṇa yā yutu*" ("saying 'I go for refuge to the Buddha,' virtuous people should go for refuge to the Buddha"). Because Vidyācakravartī emphasizes the act of taking refuge (*saraṇa*) in the Buddha at the end of each paragraph, this *baṇapota* has come to be known as the *Butsarāṇa*. Because of its richness, it has been admired both as a literary master-piece as well as a *baṇapota*. Sannasgala remarks: "The *Butsarāṇa* is one of the three of four Sinhala prose texts which became most popular both as a literary work as well as a *baṇapota*." Puñci Baṇḍāra Sannasgala, *Siṃhala Sāhitya Vamśaya*, p. 136. For a recent study on Buddhist devotion as represented in Sinhala literary materials, see Charles Hallisey, *Devotion in the Buddhist Literature of Medieval Sri Lanka* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1988).

⁵³ The six heavens are: (1) *Cātummahārājika*, (2) *Tāvātimsa*, (3) *Yāma*, (4) *Tusita*, (5) *Nimmānaratī* and (6) *Paranimmīta-vasavattī*.

⁵⁴ It is important to compare this *Butsarāṇa* reference with some sections of the *Purāṇa Sinhala Baṇapota*. The *Purāṇa Sinhala Baṇapota* (pp. 15-16) states that at the time when the Buddhas are not born (*abuddhotpādakāla*) one cannot listen to *saddhamma*.

⁵⁵ This reference to thieves seems to be an allusion to the story of Aṅgulimāla which highlights the Buddha's ability to discipline people who are difficult to discipline (*purisadammasārathī*). For the story of Aṅgulimāla, see Vidyācakravartī, *Butsarāṇa*, ed. Vāliṇṭa Sorata Nāyaka Thera (Mount Lavinia: Abhaya Prakāśakayō, 1966), pp. 61-66.

⁵⁶ See the story of the elephant Nālāgiri in the *Butsarāṇa*, pp. 67-82. It is an illustration of the Buddha's success in disciplining non-humans.

⁵⁷ This refers to the taming of the snake king Nandopananda by Mahāmoggallāna Thera. See *Butsarāṇa*, pp. 84-90.

⁵⁸ Vidyācakravartī's visin viracita *Amṛtāvaha nam vū Butsarāṇa*, ed. Vāliṇṭa Sorata Nāyaka Thera, p. 1; Vidyācakravartī, *Butsarāṇa*, ed. Labugama Laṅkānanda (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1968), p. 1.

⁵⁹ Though the Pāli commentaries of the fifth century CE contain some compounds such as *saddhammaṭṭhitakāma* (the desire for the endurance of good doctrine), the term *kāma* is often treated negatively. Vidyācakravartī's usage in this opening paragraph is distinct from such previous usages, not only because the term *kāmāti* is frequently used, but also because it is employed in an innovative rhetorical construction. To convey his affective, religious sentiments, Vidyācakravartī has used the term '*kāmāti*' 21 times in 22 lines.

⁶⁰ *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* defines *kāma* as "pleasantness, pleasure-giving, an object of sensual enjoyment and sense-desire." (*The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, eds. T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, p. 203.) It is also important to note the fact that this term is not "analyzed till the later books of the Canon." (*Ibid.*, p. 203). A later text, the *Niddesa* presents two types of *kāma*: (1) *vatthukāmā* (desires relating to external/physical objects) and (2) *kilesakāmā* (desires relating to defilements).

⁶¹ *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* states that "[i]n all enumerations of obstacles of perfection, or of general divisions and definitions of mental conditions, *kāma* occupies the leading position. It is the first of five obstacles (*nīvaraṇāni*), the three *esaṇās* (longings), the four *upādānas* (attachments), the four *oghas* (floods of worldly turbulence), the four *āsavas* (intoxicants of mind), the three *taṇhās*, the four *yogas* . . . *Kāma* is most frequently connected with *rāga* (passion) . . . all expressing the active, clinging, and impulsive character of desire. . . . In connection with synonyms it may be noticed that most of the verbs used in *kāma*-context are verbs the primary meaning of which is "adhering to" or "grasping," hence, attachment. . . . Under this aspect *kāma* is essentially an evil. . . ." (*The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*,

eds. T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, p. 203.) See also p. 204 for a list of similes which highlight negative aspects of *kāma*.

⁶² The four-fold unpleasant states which Vidyākakravartī mentions are hell (*niraya*), the realms of animals (*tirisan*), spirits (*preta*), and titans (*asurakāya*). According to Theravāda Buddhism, sentient beings are born in five realms. They are broadly divided into two as *sugati* (realm of bliss) and *dugati* (realm of misery). They are hell (*niraya*), the realm of animals (*tirisan*; P. *tiracchānayani*), the realm of spirits (*preta*; P. *pittivisaya*), the human world (P. *manussaloka*), and the world of gods (P. *devaloka*). While the first three are realms of misery, the last two are realms of bliss. These five *gatis* increased to six later. See footnote 63.

⁶³ Frank and Mani Reynolds draw our attention to a contemporary (14th C.). Thai text called the *Three Worlds According to King Ruang* which has graphic descriptions of miserable (*dugati*) states. It mentions six *gatis*—the realm of the hell beings, animals, suffering ghosts, *asura*, human, and *devatā*. It presents a detailed and graphic outline of hells on pp. 66-84. According to Reynolds, it is “a sermon that seeks to make the Dhamma more accessible to the laity” and “an expression of the orthodox Theravāda tradition” (p. 5). The centrality of notions of hell as scare tactics is highlighted further in Reynolds’ statement that “the most famous single passage in the entire sermon is the one that deals with the hell called Lohasimbali” (p. 30). Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982).

⁶⁴ The notion of the city of *nirvāṇa* is very popular among Sinhala Buddhists. The *Saddharmaratnāvali* has an elaborate description of the city of *nirvāṇa* (Dharmasēna Thera, *Jewels of the Doctrine*, p. 156). In Sinhala literature, both *nirvāṇa* and *saddharma* (*sadhamnuvara*, p. 207) are referred to metaphorically as a city. For a well documented account of the city of *nirvāṇa* see Charles Hallisey’s, “The *Sutta* on *Nibbāna* as a Great City,” *Buddhist Essays: In Honour of Hammalawa Saddhātissa*, ed. Pollamure Sorata et al. (London: Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre, 1992), pp. 38-67.

⁶⁵ In the *puṇyānumodanāva* (P. *puññānumodanā*), Buddhist monks chant a stereotypical formula called *pin vākya*. The *pin vākya* contains the explicit statement that Buddhists can attain their religious goal by following one of the three paths. W.G. Weeraratne explains the *pin vākya* as follows: “the chanting of a stereotyped discourse which contains in it a solemn wish that the donor of the gift, on account of the merit accruing from it, may enjoy all the pleasures in this life as well as in the lives to come and at the end of the faring on (*samsāra*) attain emancipation (*nibbāna*) by following any one of the three forms of enlightenment (*śrāvakabodhi*, *paccekabodhi* and *sammāsambodhi* which are together called the *tuntarābodhiya*, the threefold enlightenment).” W.G. Weeraratne, “Anumodanā,” *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 1, ed. G.P. Malalasekera (Colombo: The Government of Ceylon, 1965), pp. 747-748.

⁶⁶ Dharmasēna Thera, *Jewels of the Doctrine: Stories of the Saddharma Ratnāvali*, trans. Ranjini Obeyesekere, p. 156.

⁶⁷ See Hallisey's following observation of 'seneha': "[T]hey characterize their relations to the Buddha in terms of love (sneha)." Charles Hallisey, *Devotion in the Buddhist Literature of Medieval Sri Lanka*, p. 111.

⁶⁸ Vidyācakraṇvartī, *Buṭṣaraṇa*, ed. Vāḷiviṭṭa Sorata Nāyaka Thera, p. 1; Vidyācakraṇvartī, *Buṭṣaraṇa*, ed. Laḅugama Laṅkānanda, p. 1.

BOOK REVIEWS

PETER KINGSLEY, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*—Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995 (IX+422 p.) ISBN 0-19-814988-3 £40.00.

To this day, most classicists are happy to ignore, for all practical purposes, the vast and multi-faceted amount of evidence from Near Eastern cultures, even when they are willing to pay lip service to its relevance to their own field. Thus ignorance, which reflects a long tradition of splendid isolation of classical studies since the nineteenth century, especially in the universities of the German speaking world, has recently received a strong impetus from an unsuspected source: the French school of Jean-Pierre Vernant and his students, whose focus on the religious structures of the classical *polis* renders difficult, at the very least, the understanding of historical influences and transformations. In recent years, however, the comparative and contextual study of archaic and classical Greek and ancient Near Eastern religious and intellectual traditions seems to have gained some new momentum. Due perhaps mainly to the sustained efforts of Walter Burkert for religion (in particular in his *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*), and Martin West (Kingsley's *Doktorvater* at Oxford) for intellectual trends, the powerful links between Greek and various Near Eastern movements of ideas, since the archaic period, are now becoming more easily recognized, although this recognition is still that of a minority of scholars. Moreover, this direction of research has recently reached the limelight, thanks to Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* and its *succès de scandale*. There is little doubt in my mind that here lies a major field of investigation for the future study of ancient religion in the Mediterranean and the Near East. The book under review is a major contribution to the development of this field. The other field on which Kingsley makes a significant impact is the long and curious *Fortleben* of various ideas and thought patterns, of ultimate Oriental origin, and their passage from Greek thought to Arabic philosophy, whence they came to influence, again, the later development of Western thought.

More or less simultaneously with his first major study, the author publishes a dozen articles in various leading scholarly journals, which are intended to complement the main argument of the book. It is therefore the combined effort of these publications that should be taken into account in order to measure the total impact of his effort on the world of classical scholarship. Kingsley is well aware of the controversial nature of many of the theses he advocates. The book's twenty four dense chapters are divided into three parts: philosophy, mystery and magic. This very division alludes to the complexity of the argument: in order to understand Empedocles, Kingsley argues, we should stop thinking along the known paths of traditional disciplines, such as "Greek philosophy." Empedocles was at the same time, he claims, "a magician and a philosopher, a wonder-worker and a thinker." Disciplinary boundaries are not the only ones crossed over, or even ignored, by the author. The Sicilian Empedocles's influence on the growth of Western culture (in the fields of science, religion and philosophy), is unparalleled; Kingsley seeks to show that some main traits of his thought are rooted in the East (in particular Iran), and that this thought would in its turn influence Oriental thought, especially in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt (Hermetism) and in medieval Arabic philosophy and Sufism (up to the figure of Suhrawardi).

It is impossible to summarize here the extremely rich arguments of the various chapters, but one should at least mention the very high level of philological scholarship, as well as the sharpness of the polemics which underline much of the book. Indeed, the attempt to break artificial boundaries of fields drawn mainly along linguistic lines, is certainly not a new one. This tradition of scholarship, however, remains a minority position among classicists, who usually do not possess the necessary skills in order to either usefully contribute to it or convincingly fight it. Beyond the lack of tools, the comparative study of religious and intellectual trends during the archaic period remains a very difficult task, since we are dealing with a highly truncated evidence. Very much depends upon the interpretive orientation. Those scholars who believe intuitively in the transmission of patterns of thought and behaviour between societies are usually unable to convince their more conservative colleagues that their is a fruitful direction.

Although the book under review is written primarily with classicists in mind, it obviously deals with topics of the utmost interest for the comparative student of religious phenomena in ancient societies. In brief, Empedocles is perceived as a "seer", a figure widely known in the Mediterranean and

in the Near East in antiquity. What we can learn about him is of direct relevance for our understanding of conceptions of magical powers, of conceptions of the underworld, or of dream divination in antiquity. Dealing, for instance, with the magical powers referred to in *Fragment 111*, Kingsley notes that the closest parallel to Empedocles's image of a person capable of descending to and returning from the underworld at will is found in the practices of a Zoroastrian magus at Babylon, as described in Lucian's *Menippus* (p. 226). Moreover, Kingsley deals with the roots of such phenomena, arguing for North Asiatic shamanist as well as Iranian influences, and also with their later repercussions, for instance on Hellenistic magic and alchemy, as revealed by the papyri. In the process, some new light is shed upon, for instance, the Greek Mysteries and the relationships between oral and written traditions. The evidence of both the newly found gold plates and the magical papyri underline the continuity of the magical lore between the Greeks of Empedocles's time and the Roman Empire (p. 314).

The perception of Empedocles as a seer and the new delimitation of an important function of religious and intellectual leadership in archaic societies should encourage fresh discussion of the phenomenon of prophecy, for instance, and of its relationship with another central phenomenon of transmission of knowledge in the ancient Near East: Wisdom. The close historical contacts between shamans and what Marcel Detienne called "maîtres de vérité", as argued by Kingsley, are another area where future research should lead to promising results. Altogether, this recognition of some shamanistic roots of what would later become leading traits of Western intellectual history brings to mind the radical theses recently propounded by Carlo Ginzburg in his *Ecstasies*. Here is a clear place where religious historians should have their say, in an emerging debate which might transform our perceptions of Western intellectual and religious history.

This book will probably be hotly discussed in coming years. One would hope that historians of ancient religion, and not only classicists, will read it carefully. Indeed, Dr. Kingsley has put us all very much in his debt. "Pour un coup d'essai, c'était un coup de maître."

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JEAN KELLENS, *Le pantheon de l'Avesta ancien*—Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag 1995 (159 p.) ISBN 3-88226-207-9 (cloth) DM 98.00.

In a number of substantial books and papers, the philologist Jean Kellens from the Collège de France has brought about a revision of the current interpretation of the Old Avestan texts and the early history of Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism.¹

One of the leading experts in Avestan grammar,² Kellens adheres methodologically to what he labels a 'strict philology'. This is an approach to the Avesta which relies exclusively on the linguistic (etymological, grammatical, etc.) analysis of the texts and denies the validity of the (later) Zoroastrian tradition of the Pahlavi documents (commentaries to the Avestan texts, theological treatises) and other historical sources (e.g., archaeology).

Although the implications of this methodology from a hermeneutical point of view may appear rather naive, Kellens' results are astonishing. By means of his 'strict philology', Kellens was able to dismantle some of the basic assumptions of the conventional interpretation of the Old Avestan texts and to unmask the traditional view of Zaratruštra and his religious reform as an untenable speculation.

According to the traditional view of the early history of Zoroastrianism (or, to use a term invented by Ilya Gershevitch, 'Zarathuštrianism'³), Zoroaster (= Zaratruštra) reformed the polytheistic religion of his time into a monotheistic faith which is deeply rooted in a dualistic conception of the universe.⁴ According to the traditional theory, Zaratruštra's monotheistic reform went along with the condemnation of the *daeūuas*, that is the old Indo-Aryan gods.⁵ The *daeūuas* therefore appear in the post-Zarathuštrian Iranian religious tradition no longer as gods, but as demons.

Having already criticized the idea of Zaratruštra's monotheism in previous publications,⁶ in *Le pantheon de l'Avesta ancien* Jean Kellens examines this traditional *daeūua*-hypothesis.⁷

Kellens builds several arguments against the traditional theory which claims that the *daeūuas* rejected by Zaratruštra should be identified with the old Indo-Aryan gods. The following are just a few of his arguments: According to the Younger Avesta, the battle against the *daeūuas* did not begin with Zaratruštra but with the heros of the mythical age; there is no authentic record of an original word **daiyā-* ('god') in any Iranian language; on the contrary, the general Iranian term for 'god' is **baga-*.

In opposition to the conventional *daeūua*-hypothesis, Kellens argues that there has never been a demonisation of the *daeūuas*. According to Kellens, beginning with their separation from the Indians (or Indo-Iranians) the Iranians gave a pejorative connotation to the word *deiyó-* and used instead the word **bhégyo-* to define the divinity.⁸ Thus conclusion is at the same time convincing and speculative.

As a matter of fact, the *bagas* are to a large extent absent from the theological terminology of the Avesta.⁹ That's why Kellens' investigation turns into a search of what has become of the *bagas* in the Avesta.¹⁰ As a result, Kellens is convinced to have discovered some 'new' categories or titles of divine beings which hitherto had never been identified as such:

[a] In the Gāthās the *isānt* ("they who try to come") are divine beings who come to the place where the ritual activity is occurring. Thus the sacrificing priest has to select which divine beings are worthy of taking part in the ritual and which aren't. This ritual selection (*le tri rituel*) functions according to the dualistic ideology. Those divine beings who are considered as unworthy of receiving cultic honours and who have to be rejected are to be identified with the *daeūuas*, that is, the demons.

[b] In the other long Old Avestan text, the Yasna Haptaṛhāiti, the title *hant* ("they who are") designates all the (good and bad) elements of the divine universe: the *daeūuas*, the gods or entities who are commonly called Aməša Spəntas and Ahura Mazdā. The *hant* are the same as the *bagas*.

According to Kellens, the main religious innovation of the Old Avestan texts lies in a hierarchisation in the ritual theology. The old Indo-Aryan deities were therefore neither denied nor rejected but subordinated to Ahura Mazdā. Ahura Mazdās preeminence is articulated in cosmogonic, ritual and eschatological terms. The preeminence of Ahura Mazdā was out of discussion within the Zoroastrian tradition, ever since.

As usual, Kellens' book is full of learned discussions of philological data and contains many stimulating observations and suggestions (e.g., regarding the relations between the Gāthās and the Yasna Haptaṛhāiti or the relations between the Avestan and Vedic texts). In its attempt to dismantle the traditional theory the book makes sense; however, Kellens own theory at first is tempting but ultimately fails to convince the reader. One thing is for certain,

after *Le pantheon de l'Avesta ancien* it will be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the traditional theory of Zoroāštra's condemnation of the *daeūuas* and his 'religious reform' in general.

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¹ Among Kellens' numerous publications the following titles are of direct importance to the study of Zoroastrianism: "Saošiiant-", *Studia Iranica*, 3, 1974, pp. 187-209; *Le Fravardin Yasṯ (1-70). Introduction, édition et glossaire* (Iranische Texte, Heft 6), Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag 1975; "Yasna 31,9: La faveur d'Armaiti", *Studia Iranica*, 4, 1975, pp. 145-158; "Un 'ghost-god' dans la tradition zoroastrienne", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 19, 1977, pp. 89-95; "Yasna 46,1 et un aspect de l'idéologie politique iranienne", *Studia Iranica*, 11, 1983, pp. 143-150; "Die Religion der Achämeniden", *Altorientalische Forschungen*, 10, 1983, pp. 107-123; "La prière d'identification dans la tradition zoroastrienne", *L'expérience de la prière dans les grandes religions. Actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve et Liège (22-23 novembre 1978)*, ed. by Henri Limet and Julien Ries (Homo religiosus 5), Louvain-la-Neuve 1980, pp. 119-128; "Characters of ancient Mazdaism", *History and Anthropology*, 3, 1987, pp. 239-262; "Ahura Mazdā n'est pas un dieu créateur", *Études irano-aryennes offertes à Gilbert Lazard* (Studia Iranica, cahier 7), Paris 1989, pp. 217-228; "Les fravaši", *Anges et démons. Actes du colloque de Liège et Louvain-la-Neuve 25-26 novembre 1987*, ed. by Julien Ries (Homo religiosus 14), Louvain-la-Neuve 1989, pp. 99-114; "Un avis sur vieil-avestique *mainiiu-*", *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, 51, 1990, pp. 97-123; (together with Eric Pirart) *Les textes viel-avestiques*, 3 vols., Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag 1988-1991; *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien. Quatre leçons au Collège de France* (Travaux de l'institut d'études de l'université de la Sorbonne nouvelle 14), Paris 1991; (together with Clarisse Herrenschildt) "La question du rituel dans le mazdéisme ancien et achéménide", *Archive des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 85, 1984, pp. 45-67; "L'âme entre le cadavre et le paradis", *Journal Asiatique*, 283, 1995, pp. 19-56.

² See his essential books *Les noms-racines de l'Avesta*, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag 1974; *Le verbe avestique*, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag 1984.

³ See I. Gershevitch, "Zoroaster's Own Contribution", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 23, 1964, 12-38.

⁴ According to R. Pettazzoni, *La religione di Zarathustra nella storia religiosa dell' Iran*, Bologna 1920 (repr. 1979), p. 96, dualism is not a negation of monotheism, but dualism is monotheism in two opposed and contrary aspects ("il dualismo non è negazione del monoteismo; anzi è il monoteismo stesso in due aspetti opposti e contrari"); see also Gh. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland. A Study on the Origins of Mazdeism and Related Problems*, Naples 1980, pp. 184-185.

⁵ See e.g. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland* 73-79.

⁶ See "Ahura Mazdā n'est pas un dieu créateur" and *Les textes viel-avestiques* I 26-32. In a lecture delivered at the XVIth IAHR Congress (Rome, 3rd-8th September 1990) Gh. Gnoli attacked two attempts by M. Boyce and Cl. Herrenschildt who moderately tend to undermine the monotheism-theory. Surprisingly the Italian Iranian scholar does not deal with Kellens' criticism in this context, see Gh. Gnoli, "Tendenze attuali negli studi zoroastriani", *The Notion of >Religion< in Comparative Research. Selected Proceedings of the XVIth IAHR Congress*, ed. by Ugo Bianchi, Rome: >L'erma< di Bretschneider 1995, pp. 55-62, esp. pp. 58-59.

⁷ To elucidate his point one of the four appendices offers extracts of some of the basic texts by J. Duchesne-Guillemin, M. Molé and Th. Burrow dealing with the *daeūuas*. Since every reader of Kellens' book will certainly know these texts and since the extracts are given by Kellens without any comments this appendix seems to me unsatisfying and unnecessary.

⁸ As in the Iranian languages, in the Slavonic languages the words deriving from **deiwo-* have a pejorative meaning whereas the words deriving from **bhégyo/bhágyo-* stand for divinities. In appendix I Kellens illustrates this analogy with the help of two Moravian tales (presented and translated by Mireille Vanhemelryck).

⁹ There are very few instances where the word *baga-* is used in the Avesta. Kellens' discussion of these texts is very brief. Here and in other sections of the book, one would have expected a reference to St. Zimmer, "Iran. *baga-* — ein Gottesname?", *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, 43, 1984, pp. 187-215.

¹⁰ Therefore the title of Kellens' book is somewhat misleading. Kellens' book is not an investigation about the actual divinities of the Older Avesta but tries to explain the absence of the *bagas* in the text!

SHAUL SHAKED, *Dualism in Transformation. Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran* (Jordan Lectures 1991)—London: School of Oriental and African Studies 1994 (176 p.) ISBN 0-7286-0233-4 (cloth) £25.00.

The reconstruction of Sasanian Zoroastrianism usually focuses on the Pahlavi texts thus creating a relatively homogeneous picture with the only difference being between "orthodox" Zoroastrianism and "heretic" Zurva-

nism. Sh. Shaked reaches another conclusion: Considering Syrian and Arabic sources too and paying attention to different traditions within the Pahlavi texts he can show that Zoroastrianism in Sasanian Iran was neither uniform nor existed a fusion of state and religion in reality though kings and priests regularly propagated this as a slogan for their own interests. Further one cannot speak of “orthodoxy” versus “heresy” until the Islamic period when the priests began to define “orthodoxy” against deviating teachings or practices.

Cosmogony and dualism (p. 5-27) are basic tenets of the religion reaching back to the Gathas. But one can observe that the “classic” cosmogonic traditions of the Pahlavi texts (e.g. in the *Bundahišn* or given by Zadspram) exist beside others; the version given by Šahrestani is a good example of pluralism within Zoroastrianism. Concerning the question of dualism Shaked develops an interesting view: dualism which is based on ethics cannot be upheld rigorously because even within the realm of evil there are good elements (cf. p. 24). Eschatology also has its roots in the Gathas and shows—analogous to cosmology—different forms and hopes. Shaked’s observation is important that during the Sasanian time universal eschatology was not the prime concern of religious faith and that also—up to the 9th century—the belief in resurrection was discussed and underwent some kind of crisis. We have a good number of texts from the end of the Sasanian and the beginning of the Islamic period which are concerned with the hereafter to strengthen the belief in resurrection (cf. p. 32-37, 46-48). In his lecture “Man and the Divine” the author shows how—due to influences from Greek, Indian and possibly Jewish and Christian ideas—the conception of man has changed against the older Avestan concept. Different “schools” provide unharmonizing textual evidences that man consists of three, four or even five entities (cf. p. 56-58). Further differences about hierarchies of religious expressions are dealt with in the next chapter (p. 71-98). There is a fair amount of evidence for “uncanonical” religion in the Sasanian period. In addition to the form of religion presented in the Pahlavi books there are three types of religion: a) the faith of an élite with spiritualized religious conception which might have influenced later Islamic mystics in Iran; b) a popular type of religion which favors also magical practices and tries to propitiate (or maybe even worship) demons to avoid sickness or harm; c) a type of “common” religious practice which does not fit all theological precepts of the priesthood without clashing directly with

them. Thus the historian can detect different layers in Sasanian Zoroastrianism but the people concerned with it certainly regarded themselves as good members of the Zoroastrian community without condemnation of any “heretics” to a larger degree. In the last chapter “The Instruments of Religion” (p. 99-131) the author questions or relativizes some widely held positions. Worthy of mention are the following two: Shaked argues that the interdependence between royalty and Zoroastrian religion as part of a national perception is less well established than is usually proposed. What the Sasanian rulers liked was to have the heads of the various religions close to them and under their control—but they never inclined to follow an official Zoroastrian program for their politics. Another scholarly position challenged by Shaked is the role of Zurvanism in the Sasanian “state-church” because he questions if there was any Zurvanism as an organised “heresy”.

The prime importance of this very stimulating book lies in the emphasis given to the fact that Sasanian Zoroastrianism is pluralistic. Some of Shaked’s positions will not go unchallenged (e.g. his stance towards Zurvanism) but the book clearly shows that it is possible also with “historical” religions to discover religio-sociological changes or layers of popular religion by reading and analyzing official theological texts carefully. Thus Shaked’s book will serve for long as an important contribution to the history of Sasanian Zoroastrianism.

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LAURIE L. PATTON (Ed.), *Authority, Anxiety, and Canon. Essays in Vedic Interpretation*—Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1994 (VII + 334 p.) ISBN 0-7914-1937-1 (cloth) US\$ 19.95.

In recent years the phenomenon “canon” has aroused remarkable scholarly attention with, which is even more remarkable, mostly positive appreciation. This attention betrays, of course, a clear change in comparison with the anti-authoritarianism of the sixties and the seventies, when all authority that had been traditionally handed down and externally imposed was a priori suspect. In the case of the phenomenon “canon” (in the sense of “holy

text” or “holy scripture”) there appeared to be some reason for suspicion indeed. Can a collection of texts dating back centuries and claiming absolute authority, operate in any other than an oppressive way? Appearances, however, are deceptive. Jonathan Z. Smith has argued that it is precisely the fixed authority of a canon that constitutes a continuous challenge for society to bring new situations under the authority of the canon time and again in a creative way.¹ The canon guarantees connection to the past and is at the same time an effective stimulus for new interpretations and applications.

Smith’s view (cited in almost every contribution) is the reference point for the volume edited by Laurie L. Patton on the authority of the most elusive canon in the field of religion, the Veda(s), which in a chameleon-like way withdraws from every proper attempt at definition. This point of reference leads to a perspective exactly opposite that of L. Renou’s classic work.² Renou’s starting point was “the glory that was the Veda” (in a very remote past) and he considered later appeals to the authority of the Veda by different sects of Hinduism as purely formal, improper and not true to the Veda. Patton’s volume tries to demonstrate that precisely in such later appeals the authority of the Veda has time and again received new dimensions. The result is a number of very fascinating “essays” of a high level of quality, the interest of which is, given the nature of the subject, not restricted only to the field of Indology.

One can only be impressed by the fact that the volume, to which so many different authors contributed, succeeded in achieving a unity of views. The reader feels more or less that she is reading one continuous story. The arrangement of the volume in three parts is lucid and shows, as it were, the expansion and actualization of the authority of the Vedas in three waves: the first part treats the reflection of the Vedas themselves on their authority; the second part deals with the role of the Vedas in classic discourse; the last part takes up the question of the Veda “in modernity and beyond”. The term “beyond” implies the (moderate) post-modern approach displayed in the volume itself (as also a product of the creativity aroused by the Vedas!). The articles are framed by an impressive introduction and afterword by Laurie L. Patton. Wendy Doniger provides a preface to the whole volume.

The essays in the first part characterize the Vedas as the “orderly” Word that is won from the chaos of sound and noise (David Carpenter), as the blueprint for the cosmos (Barbara A. Holdrege) and as a mould for the

structure of society in four classes (Brian K. Smith). Cosmos and society, in other words, are transformations of the mighty vedic Word. The second part shows how the “deuterocanonical” Purāṇas derive their authority from the Vedas and at the same time give it an entirely new content (Frederick M. Smith). We are informed of the hermeneutical strategies of the Vedānta, of which different schools confirm their own doctrine by a meticulous exegesis of a vedic text with the salvation of the pupil as the final goal (Francis X. Clooney, S.J.). Further, it is demonstrated how the appeal to the Veda in the theory of Sanskrit drama served to turn the drama into a separate “cosmos”, in which the differences between gods and demons and between the four classes lose their sharp edges (David L. Gitomer). Part Three begins with the Western reception of the Vedas, initially known only by name or in fragments, as a point of reference for Westerners’ own (romantic) frustrations and expectations (Dorothy M. Figueira). Next, the adoption of the Vedas in the so-called Hindu Renaissance is treated, with reference to the Ārya Samāj (John E. Llewellyn) and the Brahmo Samaj, in which, for that matter, the adoption failed (Anantanand Rambachan). The last essay deals with some modern Indian scholars who consider the vedic “seers” to be prototypes of Indian cultural and national identity (Laurie L. Patton).

My criticism of the volume is not so much directed at its contents as what it fails to include. The Indian counterpart of the concept “canon”, (*veda*) *prāmāṇya* (both terms have the same semantic origin: “measure”), is treated only indirectly. The reason for this omission is obvious: the attention of the authors is fully concentrated on the canon as a cultural phenomenon (a kind of steering mechanism of a society), while the claims to transcendence connected with the phenomenon are taken for granted. But it is precisely these claims to transcendence that have been the subject of internal Indian discussion, the central themes of which are the questions of whether the Vedas have personal authors (divine or human) and of whether they are “eternal” (i.e., removed from the periodic cosmic dissolution). In my view, that the volume bypasses this discussion entirely is a serious flaw and a sign of scholarly cultural bias.

Further, the motif of “anxiety” has received too little systematic attention to answer the expectations aroused by the title. Between the lines, however, the implications of this motif are fully clear: without the “canon” humanity and the cosmos are in danger of sinking into a chaos of noise, opinions and

a structureless existence. May this valuable volume be a stimulus to further reflection on this subject.

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¹ Smith Jonathan Z., "Sacred Persistence: Toward a Redescription of Canon," in: Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 36-52.

² Renou, Louis, *The Destiny of the Veda in India*, tr. Dev Raj Chanana (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass, 1965).

DIETER HARMENING (Ed.), *Hexen heute: magische Tradition und neue Zusatzen*—Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 1991 (163 p.) ISBN 3-88479-589-9 (paper) DM 29.80.

Some important recent research on the subject of magic and witchcraft has been surveyed in NUMEN (e.g., vol. 31, 1984: 129-35; vol. 36, 1990: 276-7). More publications are pouring from the presses, some of them of interest to readers with an inclination towards the sociology of contemporary civilisation, rather than of genuine scholarly value. But the subject has also prompted first-rate scholarship and opened new perspectives, showing that witchcraft today is not simply a continuation of the 19th cent. revival of occultism. Already the late Christina Larner's *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief* (Oxford 1984, paperback, ed. 1987), though mainly concerned with witches trials in Europe, especially in England and Scotland, had some illuminating pages on "witch-hunting as women-hunting." The gender aspect is also highlighted by a Stockholm doctoral dissertation in Comparative Religion, analysing the "outbreak of the Swedish witchcraft panic," and subsequent trial, in Upper Dalarma (1668-1671). Contemporary witchcraft beliefs and their "marketing" in pamphlets and journals, also with the help of sex-oriented elements (especially colour pictures), as well as by coverage and advertising in the media, are the subject of an excellent volume edited by D. Harmening. The 12 au-

thors (4 male and 8 female) jointly and severally deserve high marks for their absorbing chapters which originated in a 1988 conference and resulted, *inter alia*, in an exhibition on "Witchcraft Today." It is surely unfair to single out individual contributions from a consistently good volume, but the present reviewer was particularly fascinated by the chapter on contemporary witchcraft trials in German Courts (where, obviously, the accusations were not based on the *Malleus* but on suspicion of "quackery" i.e., illegal healing practices and of misleading and exploiting gullible customers), and by the chapter "'I am a witch': mythical images of the feminine or the metaphors of feminist struggle." The 21 newspaper advertisements reproduced on pp. 90-91 are an eye-opener, and the 6 colour plates convey to the reader an idea of what the 1991 exhibition in Hamburg must have been like.

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GUSHIST AND QUTBIAN APPROACHES TO GOVERNMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS ASSASSINATION

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Summary

The disciples and pseudo-followers of the religious ideologues Sayyid Qutb and Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook have now lived without their mentors for more than twenty-five years (in the case of Qutb) and for more than a decade (in the case of Kook). In both instances, putative “disciples” of these thinkers committed assassinations of the acknowledged domestic leader of a sitting government: Sadat in 1981 by *al-Jihad al-Islami*; Rabin in 1995 by *Eyal*. In this paper, the theories of both mentors and their ersatz disciples on the issue of violence against the sitting government will be examined for possible comparative results. Rather than finding a symmetry in these examples of Middle Eastern fundamentalist violence, the author elaborates a sharp difference between the two: one (Islam) is centered on the issue of apostasy, while the other (Judaism) is centered on the issue of communal rights and protections. Rather than providing a point for drawing similarities, fundamentalist-inspired assassination points out the differences between Israeli-Jewish and Egyptian-Islamic fundamentalisms.

On August 29, 1966, the grandfather of Egyptian Muslim fundamentalism, Sayyid Qutb, aged 60, was hanged in Cairo by an official government tribunal. For decades, Qutb had been an ideologue and publicist on behalf of a radicalization of the Muslim Brotherhood Association, which often stood in opposition to the ruling regime. Oftentimes, Qutb was imprisoned for his views and associations. In 1966, according to the Egyptian government, Qutb had been at the center of a plan for military action against the government, which included the planned assassination of President Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir, along with the prime minister, and the heads of intelligence and the military police. For these crimes he was put to death.¹

Fifteen years after Qutb died, on October 6, 1981, a young military officer named Khalid al-Islambouli, inculcated on Muslim Brotherhood doctrine, led a group of fellow soldiers towards a reviewing stand and killed the President of Egypt Anwar al-Sadat.

On March 9, 1982, the father of Israeli Jewish fundamentalism, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, died. Kook was the son of Rabbi A.I. Kook, first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, noted mystic and spiritual authority, a religious ideologue who had made a kind of peace with the godless cultural Zionism of state-building. The son Zvi Yehudah became his father's devoted editor and undisputed interpreter. To first a small group of disciples, and then—after the conquest of Biblical lands during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war—to a swelling assortment of galvanized young men, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook became the leading light of the religious-nationalist settlement movement, which ultimately crystallized into an organization called Gush Emunim (Faith Bloc). While Kook never plotted to kill the political leaders of Israel, he was inspiration to a range of disciples who chose over the course of the next few years to engage in “restrained intercommunal violence” (as Ehud Sprinzak characterized it) which to varying degrees has been treated by a succession of Israeli governments as illegal.² As one recent observer put it: “To this day, more than a decade after his death, his ideas remain a beacon for many in the Zionist yeshivot, and even more so for the leadership of Gush Emunim and the movement for the settlement of Jews in Judea and Samaria.”³ Kook died not at the hands of the Israeli government, but of natural causes at the age of 91 years. By the time he died one of his legs had been amputated, apparently the result of uncontrolled diabetes.⁴

Thirteen years after Kook died, on November 4, 1995, a young law student 26 years of age by the name of Yigal Amir, inculcated on the religious-national teachings of Kook and his disciples, shot and killed the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin.

By drawing these two semi-symmetrical characterizations and juxtapositions, I do not mean to equate Sadat's assassin with Rabin's. Nor, for the purposes of religious history, do I mean to compare the

religious or political impact of Sayyid Qutb's legacy in Egypt with that of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook's in Israel. But there is a useful comparison which we might undertake in looking at the general principles involved in modern-day Islamic and Jewish radicalism when it comes to killing a head of state. To date, there have been only a very few attempts to draw thoughtful comparisons between Islamic and Jewish fundamentalism, and this study is intended to challenge the prevailing view which attributes a kind of symmetry to the two religious movements.⁵

One assassin acts on behalf of an organization which dubs itself *al-Jihād al-Islamī* ("the Islamic Struggle"), rife with secret police operatives and in touch with substantial officious clerics who publicly and surreptitiously vindicate the crime; the other assassin acts in concert with an organization anacronymized as *Eyal*, an abbreviation for "The Fighting Jewish Organization,"⁶ rife with secret police operatives and in touch with substantial officious clerics who publicly and surreptitiously vindicate the crime. Both assassins act within a national legacy of political violence which continues to this day. Anwar al-Sadat was not the first victim of the assassin, nor was he the last. The Mubarak regime, with its layers of corrupt bureaucrats and intelligence officers, and a myriad of Egyptian intellectuals who are being left out to be dried, remains a target for some future Islamist avenger. On the other hand, with Nachman Ben-Yehuda's timely study of *Political Assassination by Jews*,⁷ and with publicly-aired calls for the assassination of Israeli Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak only a few months old, no one can justifiably see Amir's act as a singular event in the Israeli national culture. These assassins are not crazed lone gunmen; they each symbolize a national mood and political environment.

I do not intend to specifically dissect the personal histories of Amir or Islambouli. Of far greater importance is the effort to understand the religious teachings which brought these two young men to do what they did.

To be more precise, in the case of Sadat's assassination, we are in possession of a work entitled *al-Fariḍah al-Ghā'ibah*, known in English as *The Neglected Duty*, written by a disciple of Qutb who was in turn put to death by the Egyptian government in April of 1982. The work, which has been translated and annotated by Johannes J.G. Jansen, was widely published in the Egyptian daily newspaper *al-Ahrar* just more than two months after the assassination. This pamphlet has been rightly dubbed by Jansen as "the creed of Sadat's assassins."

In the case of Rabin's assassination, there does not yet exist a similar document. But in the state trial conducted against Amir, and in the freewheeling Israeli press, there has emerged what amounts to a "creed." To be fair, neither the Egyptian *Faridah* nor the Israeli record specifically invokes either Qutb on the one hand or Kook on the other. I yet feel confident that we may speak of Qutbian and Kookist tendencies in the matter of murdering the legally authorized political head of state.

Before addressing the specifics of these two creeds, some context is in order. Long before the modern era, both religious traditions of Judaism and Islam were possessed of a mechanism whereby murder, under certain circumstances, was made licit. The Pentateuch may declare "Thou shalt not kill" [Ex. 20: 13] and the Qur'an may announce "Kill not your children. . . nor slay the soul which God has forbidden you to slay" [17: 33-35]; yet both sacred scriptures provide for what can only be described as religious exceptions to these lofty pronouncements. In the case of the Pentateuch, a range of non-Israelite cultic behavior merits death by communal, if not individual, action. And in the case of the Qur'an, behavior which affronts the believers' faith merits the punishment of death.

By the time a post-scriptural tradition crystallizes, Rabbinic Judaism has abandoned the notion of licit murder for doctrinal grounds while still maintaining a mechanism for licit murder. The principle is neatly summed up by four words in the Babylonian Talmud—*ba' le-hargekha, hashkem le-hargō*—"If someone comes to kill you—rise up to kill him."⁸

Alternatively, Islam, because of its imperial and universal political scope, was able to establish a doctrinal threshold for inflicting capital punishment. The *murtadd*, or “apostate,” is a Muslim, whether by birth or conversion, who abandons Islam either for authorized religions, or for heresy, or for idolatry. According to the *shari‘ah*, the apostate is to be given a 3-day opportunity to recant, and if that fails to bring the expected result, he is to be executed. While it is nowhere explicitly stated in the Qur’an that execution is the appropriate punishment for apostasy, it is the case that Sura 2: 217: *wa-man yartadid minkum ‘an dīnihi fa-yamut wa-huwa kāfir*. . . “Whoever among you apostatizes from his religion and dies an infidel. . .” is regarded as proof-text enough.⁹

It is in this legalistic context that Sadat’s assassins explicate their action. In a work which cites most liberally from the strict 14th century Islamic jurist Ibn Taymiyah, the *Faridah al-Gha’ibah* declares:

The rulers of this age are in apostasy from Islam (*hukkām al-muslimīn fī riddah ‘ani-’l-islām*). They were raised at the tables of imperialism, be it Crusaderism or Communism, or Zionism. They carry nothing from Islam but their names, even though they pray and fast and claim to be Muslim. . . an apostate has to be killed.¹⁰

In this instance, the author of the *Faridah* declares in religio-legalistic fashion that the legal schools of Malikis, Shafi‘is, and Hanbalis are all in agreement that an apostate must be killed. The form of the apostasy is Westernism, or “Crusaderism,” and the rightful punishment is death.

When we look to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, we discover a very different order of argumentation invoked in justification of the assassination. The issue is not apostasy, or some doctrinal deviation. Indeed, in the classic codes going back to medieval times, and across the cultural divide of Islam and Christendom, there is in Jewish law no comparable assault on the life and limb of the apostate.¹¹ Thus, the issue here is cast in a somewhat more interpersonal—or at least communal—texture, as it involves the legal ruling concerning the *mōser*, the one who hands over a Jew to be

killed, or the *rōdef*, a person who is pursuing another in order to kill him. The relevant passages of the authoritative sixteenth-century jurist Yosef Karo may be cited:

It is permitted to kill the *moser* in any instance, even in our time. It is permitted to kill him before he hands a Jew over. But if he merely says, “Behold! I am about to hand over someone in body or in property”—and even if it is but a little property—he has rendered himself liable to be killed. One should adjure him not to hand over a person, but if he is insolent and says “No, I will yet hand him over!” it is a divine commandment to kill him, and he who is expeditious in killing him has greater merit.¹²

The relevant passage for the ruling of the pursuer in the same law code is found at *Shulḥan ‘Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat*, 425: 1:

He who pursues his fellow man in order to kill him, who has been warned, and yet he continues to pursue him; even if he pursues a minor, behold all Jews are commanded to save the victim by incapacitating the pursuer. If one cannot thereby avert the pursuer and save the victim, then one should kill the *rōdef* of the victim. Thus, one has killed him even though he has not yet effected the murder.

Here then is what the young assassin-law student said according to police transcripts during his investigation, a position he and his supporters trumpeted from his arrest through the final day of court: “All that I did I would never have done were it not for my religious obligation to defend the people of Israel from the *moser* Yitzhak Rabin, as has been stated by many Rabbis who tremble over the destiny of the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.”¹³

In both instances, religious authorities arose to counter the supposedly flawed understandings of tradition expressed by the assassins’ sympathizers. Jansen devotes nearly as much space to the *Faridah* in his study *The Neglected Duty* as he does to a range of responses penned by the likes of Shaykh Jadd al-Ḥaqq, mufti of al-Azhar at the time. Similarly, officious Israeli and American-Jewish rabbis have either pronounced to journalists or penned essays exposing the failure of Amir’s supposedly flawed analysis of the halakhic imperatives cited in his defense. Whether these apologists for a “kinder, gentler” tradition are right or wrong, there remains a core of believers who

live by the creeds of the assassins. They will not be silenced or stilled by apologia.

Returning to the Israeli version of our theme, nowhere in my search of Zvi Yehudah Kook's writing could I find anything approximating a call to murder an Israeli head of state. The most agitated and uncompromising round of Kookist statements came during the first Rabin government, during the 1974 Kissinger shuttle diplomacy era. Zvi Yehudah Kook was unyielding; for example, he never referred to the US Secretary of State by name throughout the period—he always referred to this famously Jewish international power broker by the most indelicate euphemism *ba'al ha-goyah*, “he who is married to a gentile.” Rabbi Kook openly called the Rabin government of 1974 a “tragi-comedy” and a farce: “it is worthless, nothing more than a disgrace.”¹⁴ But try as I may, having perused his writings and proclamations from that time period, I find nothing which directly brings us from Zvi Yehudah Kook's Point A to Yigal Amir's Point B.

Still, the seeds for action were present in the Kookist world view. As one reads Kook's venomous contempt for the first Rabin government, a portrait emerges which is no less radical than that of the *Faridah*: “If there is any coercion on the part of anyone to negate the sovereignty of our state from [Judea and Samaria], are we all not then religiously obligated to rise in insurrection and offer up our lives for such a cause?”¹⁵

What I am more interested in is to draw whatever comparisons one might make between these two extreme acts of modern political violence. Do they indicate a symmetry between the fundamentalist movements in each state? And, since they both seem to be targeting policy makers who are pursuing peace of one kind or another, are the motivations for each group the same? We've certainly heard enough punditry to that effect. I argue differently:

In these acts, and in the swirl of authentic literature or evidence that they have generated, it becomes clear that these are two very different fundamentalisms, despite our incessant efforts to draw them together. One is a fundamentalism of an imperial, global, and universal religion—or at least with aspirations to such. Accordingly,

apostasy has been always punishable by death, and alternate ideological constructs, such as “Westernism” become the actual threat worthy of struggling against. The other is a fundamentalism of what one historian has called an “ethnic monotheism” with no universal or global aspirations.¹⁶ Except for the writings of Meir Kahane, I have yet to find a far-reaching critique of Westernism in either of the two identifiable Israeli fundamentalist communities, the ultra-orthodox Haredim and the nationalist Gush Emunim. In making this claim, I go against the prevailing scholarly evaluation of Gushist ideology. The regnant scholarly opinion may be rendered in one of two ways, either a) the Gush itself is opposed to Western democratic values; or b) the Gush functions in Israeli society as an anti-democratic and even fascist force. On the other hand, I think there is ample evidence of a high regard for democratic process, both within the movement and beyond it. Within the movement, popular consensus functions within the limitations of charismatic leadership; and beyond the movement, the Gushist argument relies heavily on a call to Jewish majority consensus regarding the Oslo peace process. To cite but one example of this “democratic” spirit, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook openly declared his support for the value of Jewish majority politics during the 1974 crisis, in the clear expectation that such a majority would concur with his political stand:

A true majority of Jews, even if they are of different opinions, is a normal majority. No matter whether they are Jews with ties to the commandments, or whether they have ties to the Land of Israel—in any event they all belong to the totality of the manifestation of the divine light. And this is a normal situation. But a governmental structure which relies on the assistance of Arab representatives is an embarrassment, and a blasphemy, for which there is no cure and no penance.¹⁷

Only Meir Kahane clearly takes on the mantle of angry anti-Westernism as a full-blown ideology akin to Qutb’s “Crusaderism.”¹⁸ In the rest of Israeli Jewish fundamentalism, where Westernism is not explicitly identified as the bogeyman, grave sins against the correct order are cast in a xenophobic pressure cooker of communal rights and

individual wrongs. Admittedly, some of the most messianic extremists in the Gushist camp imbue a global and universalistic messianic dimension to their Jewish particularism. Aviezer Ravitzky has culled a few examples out of the Gushist maelstrom of the early 1980s which acclaim the universal role the redeemed Israeli nation shall play in human affairs. He portrays Rabbis Hayyim Druckman and Eliezer Waldman—each deans of Gushist rabbinical seminaries and each former parliamentarians—as confessing the universal mission of Israel and her army during the depths of the Lebanon misadventure:

... we pointed out that it is Israel's task to bring order into the world... Who is going to bring order into the world? Those who submit to evil? The great powers, which are themselves suffused with wickedness or give into it? The people of Israel is the only one which is prepared to bring order...¹⁹

In making this global shift, Rabbis Druckman and Waldman moved beyond the parameters of the more inwardly oriented Kookist view of Jewish nationalism—this despite the fact that the elder Kook was wont to refer to Israel as “the pedestal of God’s throne in this world.” The tension between restraint and messianic excess helps describe Gushist ideology for the past twenty years—but never once (to my knowledge) has this messianism been invoked in the matter of the Rabin assassination.

If we turn back to the no-longer-present founding ideologues, Sayyid Qutb and Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, we find that the distinction I have drawn in the act of latter day assassination still holds. Sayyid Qutb—the far more prolific, systematic, and substantial of the two—constructed a system based on *jahiliyyah* and *jihād*, “ignorance” and “struggle.” Whether we examine his masterful and extensive Qur’an commentary *In the Shadow of the Qur’an* or his famous prison manifesto *Milestones*, the motion of Qutb’s thought takes place on a global, and broad cultural, plane. Sayyid Qutb does not speak from ignorance; as is the case with many modern Islamists, his biography contains a decisive rendezvous with the Western culture he learned to hate. As an officer in the sprawling Egyptian Ministry of Education, he spent 1949-1950 in California and Washington, studying modern

pedagogic methods. He came back to Cairo and was permanently scarred psychologically from the prejudiced relations he experienced from Americans who dismissed him because of his dark-colored skin. Like many fundamentalists, he was exposed to American culture, and he hated what he was exposed to.²⁰

Sayyid Qutb, and most Sunni fundamentalists, declare their opponents and the targets of their fury as living in *jahiliyyah*. According to Islamic teaching, before the prophetic career of Muhammad, all of humanity—but particularly the Arabs—lived in an Age of Ignorance. Until Islam came into their lives, Muslims believe that the pre-Islamic Arabs were immoral, lustful, and depraved Bedouins. These are the marks of the Age of *jahiliyyah*. Qutb taught that the modern Arab nationalist politician was just such an immoral and depraved ignoramus. “Modernity at all costs,” the new Middle Eastern politician seemed to be saying, “even if we must abandon that embarrassing, backwards, and irrelevant religion of Islam.” Sayyid Qutb taught his fellow Egyptians to regard such secular politicians as ignoramuses who were without divine guidance:

Islam cannot accept any compromise with *jahiliyyah*, either in its concept or in the modes of living derived from this concept. Either Islam will remain, or *jahiliyyah*; Islam cannot accept or agree to a situation which is half-Islam and half-*jahiliyyah*. In this respect Islam’s stand is very clear. It says that the truth is one and cannot be divided; if it is not the truth, then it must be falsehood. The mixing and coexistence of the truth and falsehood is impossible. Command belongs to Allah, or else to *jahiliyyah*. The *Shari’ah* of Allah will prevail, or else people’s desires.²¹

Qutb taught that concerning these ignoramuses, it was a duty and an obligation of every Muslim to strive or struggle against them. Qutb declared *jihad* against the Egyptian government and the politicians who pretend to be good Muslims, but who are allowing alcohol into restaurants, sexy movies into the cinema, and Western licentiousness into public life. The reigning leaders and policy makers are poisoned with an overarching vileness, “Westernism” which is *jahiliyyah*, the very same ignorance of the godless, compassless era before Islam was

delivered to mankind. These politicians may be willing to compromise with Israel or they may not; it does not matter—these politicians must be opposed, and opposed violently, and their world-wide allies must be opposed, until they are gone. In response to such abstract and abiding Ignorance, one might simply declare it apostasy and flee from it (*takfīr wa-hijrah*). Better yet, one must struggle against it (*jihād*).²²

In the more constrained world of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, the focus of opposition is not a broad cultural construct such as “the West” or even the *goyim*, but Jews who would dare relinquish the Jewish spatial patrimony. From his oft-cited “Nineteenth Psalm” delivered on Israeli Independence Day in 1967, just a few weeks before the Six Day War, to his most bitter verbal assaults during the first Rabin government, his ire remains limited to the matter of land alone.

There may be a cultural component in Israeli society’s value wars between secular Ramat Aviv and ultra-Orthodox Bene Brak, but when an assassin coolly walked up to the duly elected head of state and shot him in the back, he was not doing battle with a cultural icon and Westernism, modernism, or all that other jive; he was killing a Jew who was putting other Jews at grave risk. This simple, almost literal, justification for the murder no doubt carries far-reaching cultural and political ramifications, but as an instance of fundamentalist activity, it points to how different Islamic and Jewish fundamentalisms really are.

Through these two isolated yet intertwined acts, we see the differences of two nomocentric fundamentalisms in the Middle East; one has global vision, and sees its enemies as outsiders and outside ideologies; the other has tunnel vision, and sees its enemies as fellow Jews acting injudiciously towards fellow Jews.

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¹ Ahmad S. Mussali, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University, 1982), chapter 1.

² "Three Models of Religious Violence: The Case of Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel," in: *Fundamentalisms and the State*, edited by M. Marty and R. Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993): 462-490, esp. 469-477.

³ Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996): 80.

⁴ The most complete English-language account of Kook is Richard L. Hoch, "The Politics of Redemption: Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah ha-Kohen Kook and the Origins of Gush Emmunim," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California—Santa Barbara, 1994.

⁵ Samuel Heilman, "The Vision from the Madrasa and Bes Medrash: Some Parallels between Islam and Judaism," in: *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, edited by M. Marty and R. Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995): 71-92. I have published a critique of Bruce Lawrence's more worthwhile and subtle approach at symmetry (his *Defenders of God* [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989]) in: "The Ins and Outs of Fundamentalism: The Israeli Case," in: *Religious Studies Review*, 19 (1993): 289-291. Another comparative approach which turns towards symmetry is provided by Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contemporary Fundamentalism: Judaism, Christianity, Islam," in: *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, edited by L. Silberstein (New York: New York University, 1993): 42-55.

⁶ *Irgun Yehudi Lohem*.

⁷ (Albany: State University of New York, 1993).

⁸ BT Berakhot 62b; Yoma' 85b and many parallels.

⁹ Joel Kraemer, "Apostates, Rebels and Brigands," *Israel Oriental Studies*, 10 (1980): 34-73. For Qutb's treatment of this verse, see *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1982) vol. 1: 228.

¹⁰ *The Neglected Duty* (New York: Macmillan, 1986): 169.

¹¹ Theodore Friedman, "Who is not a Jew? The Halakhic Status of an Apostate," *Conservative Judaism*, 41 (1988-1989): 53-60.

¹² R. Yosef Karo, *Shulḥan 'Arūkh, Hoshen Mishpat*, 388: 10.

¹³ Cited from *Yediot Aḥaronot* at the Web site freenet.buffalo.edu/~bx796/biotam.html, devoted to the lionization of Amir.

¹⁴ *Erez ha-Zvi* (Bet El: Netivey Or, 1995): 74. Note the irony of entitling this posthumous collection of Zvi Yehuadah Kook's pronouncements concerning the battle for the West Bank as "The Land of Zvi," a mocking assault against the more famous and influential book "Land of the Hart" (*Erez ha-Zvi*; 1972) by Arie Eliav, an early Israeli proponent of coming to peaceful terms with the Palestinian national movement.

¹⁵ *Erez ha-Zvi*: 71.

¹⁶ Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993).

¹⁷ *Erez ha-Zvi*: 75.

¹⁸ See the posthumously published *Ōr ha-Ra'ayōn* (Jerusalem: N.P., 1993), index s.v. *demōqratyah*.

¹⁹ Cited by Ravitzky in: *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*: 84.

²⁰ Ibrahim abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York, 1996): 133-134.

²¹ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Indianapolis: American Trust, 1990): 112.

²² The most concise rendition of Qutb's warring stance is provided in a remarkable book by Youssef Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boston: Twayne, 1990): 134-140.

GIFT AND RETURN GIFT,
GREETING AND RETURN GREETING IN INDIA.
ON A CONSEQUENTIAL FOOTNOTE BY MARCEL MAUSS¹

AXEL MICHAELS

*Quas dederis, solas semper habebis opes*² (Martial)

Summary

In a remarkable, often quoted footnote of his famous “Essai sur le don,” Marcel Mauss wonders that traditional Hindu law does not really prescribe the obligation to return a gift (Skt. *dāna*). According to some authors (J. Parry, Th. Trautmann, G. Raheja et al.) Mauss has demonstrated by this footnote his lack of a firm grasp of the theory of *dāna* since he did not notice that a *dāna* contains too much impurity or inauspiciousness to return to its donor. On the basis of striking parallels between the Śāstric theories of greeting (*abhivādanadharmā*) and gift-giving (*dānadharmā*), this paper questions the aspect of impurity in the gift and argues that kingly generosity or liberality and the meritorious attitudes of asceticism have been the major source for giving gifts.

Footnote and Banknote

The Austrian writer H.C. Artmann once played the publisher of one of his own manuscripts. After the first word there follows a raised figure one, and at the bottom of the page one reads: “This is the first footnote—not because it is required but because the reader is expecting it.”³ Indeed, a scholarly book without footnotes—that is inviting the suspicion that there is nothing to secure one’s footing. It is strange that so little is said about footnotes, even though they are product information about the wares scholars trade in.

Sometimes footnotes may even be passed over—particularly on occasions when the remarks under the line may be of crucial interest.⁴ Footnote 3 on p. 243 of the original edition, corresponding to footnote 61 on p. 146 of the English edition (or fn. 57 on p. 109 of

the German edition), of Marcel Mauss's famed "Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques" (*L'Année sociologique* 1923-24) is one such case. Mauss (1872-1950) writes in his essay, about which Lévi-Strauss is supposed to have said that everything yet to appear on the topic in question could only be a footnote to Mauss's pioneering achievement:

"Il faut convenir, que sur le sujet principal de notre démonstration, l'obligation de rendre, nous avons trouvé peu de faits dans le droit hindou (...) Même le plus clair consiste dans la règle qui l'interdit. (...)"

"Concerning the main subject of our analysis we must acknowledge that we have found few facts in Hindu law, except perhaps *Manu* VIII, 213. Clearly, it seems that originally the funeral *çraddha* [read *śrāddha*], the feast of the dead that the Brahmins expanded so much, was an opportunity to invite oneself and to repay invitations. But it is formally forbidden to act in this way [...]."

This inconspicuous footnote drew attention and criticism. It incited Jan Heesterman (1985: 36ff.) to develop his theory of the competitive and asymmetrically reciprocal nature of the ancient Indian sacrifice. According to Thomas Trautmann and Jonathan Parry, Mauss in it dismissed the "peculiar Indianness" (Trautmann) and thereby proved that he did not understand the essence of Indian gift exchange, namely its soteriological aspect (Trautmann 1981: 279, fn. 43, and 282, fn. 46; Parry 1986: 461), even if he had basically set the stage for such an understanding, as Fuller (1984: 196) and Raheja (1988: 250) note regarding this footnote, in his earlier "Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice" (1898), written in common with Henri Hubert.⁵

Indeed, Mauss had proposed the theory⁶ that gifts in an egalitarian, market-free society contain something (the spirit, *esprit du don*, Maori *hau*) of the giver that obliges the receiver to respond in kind, the gifts being fully alienated in appearance only. This "social fact" may, in Mauss's view, serve various purposes: it may, as with potlatch, take on a competitive form, or it may, as with liens, be present only residually. Gifts, however, are always based on a more or less sacral *do ut des* (see van der Leeuw 1920-21: 241-253). There is no such thing as a pure gift, a selfless and unmotivated gift or present,⁷ in a market-free society. His main question, therefore, is: "What rule of

legality and self-interest, in societies of a backward or archaic type, compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated? What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?" (Mauss 1990: 13) Mauss saw this obligation to return gifts as existing particularly in archaic societies (Polynesia, Melanesia, the Andamans, North American Indians), but he also saw the "survivals of these principles in ancient systems of law and ancient economies" (the title of the third chapter), namely in personal and property rights under Roman law; in "classical Hindu law;" and in the German laws governing liens and gift-giving.

Substantial criticism has been expressed with regard to the Indian material. Thus Parry points out that the *dānadharma*, i.e. the *dharma* of gifts (*dāna*, pl. *dānāni*), contradicts a universal norm of reciprocity⁸ as proposed by Mauss, precisely because it requires no return gift. The gift is alienated to keep it from returning, in order that no bond arise between giver and receiver. For it contains the giver's impurity, his "inauspiciousness," in Raheja's words. It has to be continuously passed on.⁹ *Dāna* in that reading of it is a kind of offering, and *dānadharma* a soteriology, the transformation of *pāpman* into *śrī* (Heesterman), rather than being a sociology of reciprocity (Trautmann). This is the reason why no evidence for an obligation to reciprocate has been found in the *Dharmaśāstra*.

Thus the point of contention is manifest. In the opinion of the authors mentioned above, Mauss should have reversed the status of footnote and main text: any form of reciprocity is rejected whenever the Hindu gift contains the "spirit" of the giver; wherever reciprocity is practised, it is not a case, in India, of religious *dānāni* but of profane exchange or trade (Parry 1986: 463).

Indeed India—or to be more precise, the legal notions based on the *Dharmaśāstra*—cannot be cited as an example for the obligation to reciprocate, not—and this is my point—because impurity is transmitted but because the theory of *dāna* arose in a period when any gift had to be measured against the highest soteriological goal, namely ascetic morality, and thus could only exist when the gift itself was ascetic—in short, when there was already a culture of open-handedness and

generosity. Where this soteriological reference was lacking, there was, in India as elsewhere, the obligation to reciprocate or pass on the gift, but not only because of a special power in the gift but also because, as similar structures in greeting behaviour show, there are communicative obligations of a general nature (i.e. applicable beyond the context of giving and receiving) that require challenges to be responded to.

The consequences of this debate are not simply academic but also bear on the modern attitude towards money and property, which attitude Mauss helped mould.¹⁰ Since Mauss (and, more prominently, Karl Marx¹¹) viewed the market economy as impersonal, as catering to interest groups and, in the end, as immoral, forms of economy in which exchange of goods and gifts assumed a dominant role in economic transactions necessarily seemed to them to be person-oriented, moral, innocent, transparent or nonexploitative. Presents and gifts as unalienable objects between economically dependent parties stood over against wares and goods as alienable objects between economically independent parties (Parry/Bloch 1989: 8). Here can still be seen the ancient reservations towards merchants, who do not themselves produce anything¹² and thus create a barrier between producer and consumer—a barrier responsible as late as the Middle Ages¹³ for their being led to the stake. And nevertheless, as Znoj (1995: 15-131) has shown at great length, most ethnologically oriented economic theories are based on materialistic, quantifiable and individualistic approaches, and thus fail to capture, or do so only reductively, the immaterial, qualitative and collective aspects of mutual obligations.

One consequence of this attitude was that even though presents (and with them gifts) were upgraded into noncommercial, gratuitous and merely morally binding transactions taking place beyond the bounds of economic trade and with no equivalence constraints, the notion of reciprocity, fundamental for materialistically based economic exchange, was nevertheless retained.

Mauss himself idealized (and thus treated reductively) those forms of society in which he saw the obligation to return gifts acting as a more humane form of distributing goods; this is especially notice-

able in his “moral conclusions:” “Fortunately, everything is still not wholly categorized in terms of buying and selling. Things still have sentimental as well as venal value, assuming values merely of this kind exist” (Mauss 1990: 65) or: “Nowadays the old principles react against rigour, abstraction, and inhumanity of our legal codes” (p. 66). “Did Mauss want to return to archaic modes of production?” asks Jean Starobinski in his book *Largesse* (1994, title of the German translation: *Gute Gaben, Schlimme Gaben*), which, with its wealth of pictures, is truly worth one’s study; only to provide the fitting answer himself: “It could just as easily be said that he had in mind instituting social relations under which the obligation to return gifts would replace a forced love of one’s neighbour” (Starobinski 1994: 108, transl. from the German translation).

“*Le don*”

The problem with Mauss’s theory is that it is argued over by ethnologists and students of comparative religion but either totally ignored or uncritically accepted by Indologists, without first examining the sources. Mauss himself was as much a philologist as he was an ethnologist or sociologist. “‘*Le don*’ is more reminiscent of a philological treatise than an ethnographic description and analysis,” writes Henning Ritter in his afterword to the new German edition of “*Die Gabe*” (2004: 190), and he refers to the “apparatus of citations, source critiques and notes ‘under the line’ [i.e. the footnotes]—apparatus that often smothers the text and has, like the exercise of a discipline, a formidable effect, shunting the train of thought into a jungle of material conditions it can barely extricate itself from.”

An Indological study of Mauss is thus long overdue. It presents us with two tasks: (a) a critical-philological analysis of the source citations (Mauss, for example, subjected the *Manusmṛiti* to a fairly superficial reading, and on sundry occasions understood or translated it wrongly),¹⁴ (b) the supplementation of additional material.¹⁵ Only when these Indological tasks have been performed will a substantial reevaluation of his theses be possible. Still, even though the voluminous material on *dāna* has so far been analyzed only sparingly,¹⁶ it

can already serve to indicate where the weaknesses of Mauss and his critics lie. I shall suggest in general terms where they do lie, before taking up the sensitive issue of reciprocity in greater detail, together with a parallel from the rules of greeting.

- * Mauss relied only on Brahminical sources, particularly the *Manusmṛiti* and the Anuśāsanaparvan of the *Mahābhārata*, and he himself saw this as an obstacle (p. 106). He took little note of Vedic writings (such as the *dānastutis*: see Patel 1929), inscriptions, narrative literature or Buddhist and Jain texts. His material thus refers to gifts that devolve in a Brahminical ritual context.
- * Mauss did not sufficiently take into account historical and social change and regional differences.¹⁷ It is, however, of some moment whether one looks at gift exchange in the early Vedic society, which scarcely knew any trade, or the class-based social order that arose from around the time of the Maurya empire, where intensive agriculture not only allowed the production of a surplus (and so new forms of gifts) but also gave rise to interregional trade and an economic structure that encompassed landownership (or usufruct), fiefdoms, tax systems, standards of weight, measurement and coinage, and more. In other words, Mauss developed his theory primarily from material relating to societies that still knew nothing of contracts between individuals, money-driven economies, trade in goods, fixed prices and coinage. The Indic material he refers to, however, already attests to these economic institutions. Mauss (1990: 55) does not overlook this point, but he maintains flatly that “the number of classes that were concerned, and the time when it flourished, need not be elaborated in detail in a comparative study,” and assumed that “this law” (apparently a generalized obligation supposedly found in the Dharmaśāstra to give gifts in return) remained only among the Brahmins, having been in force between the eighth century B.C. and the second or third century A.D. He continues: “the epic and the Brahmin law still survive in the old atmosphere: presents are still obligatory, things have special powers and form part of human persons” (Mauss 1990: 56). This is only true in part, and what is called for is to distinguish the part

that is from other forms of economic transaction that had long been practised, and recognized to have been practised by Mauss himself.

- * Due to the restricted nature of his material, Mauss did not properly differentiate between offerings, donations, gifts, largesses, presents, tributes, bribes and alms.¹⁸ All of these terms have been used to translate *dāna*,¹⁹ even though in some cases there are other Sanskrit words for it: *bhikṣā* ('alms,' particularly for beggars), *dakṣiṇā*²⁰ (in ancient India and to a certain extent still in the Dharmaśāstra synonymous with *dāna*, but later used primarily in the sense of "payment for a ritual offering"), *prasāda* (a gift handed back by priests or other religious specialists in recognition of a gift previously given to a deity), *Hindī carhāpā* or *pujāpā* (a gift with which "inauspiciousness" is passed on to an "appropriate recipient"—"a category of prestation [that] has been virtually ignored in the ethnography of Hindu caste, kinship, and ritual. . .;" Raheja 1988: 70). In addition, an inventory of the various gifts customary in ancient India is desirable,²¹ of the sort made by Groenbech (1909/12: vol. 2, 55-77) for the Germanic culture, Gurjewitsch (1972: 247-326), Duby (1977: 52-76) and Hannig (1988: 11-37) for the Christianized Middle Ages, or Raheja (1988) and van der Veer (1988) for modern India. These might be supplemented by work on folk traditions, such as that found in Koren (1954), Kriss (1972: 69-84), Lau and Voß (1988: 285-297) and Weber-Kellermann (1968: 1-8).

Vijay Nath (1987) has been the only person up to now to undertake the task of ordering the Indian material historically. Accordingly, three stages in the form of gifts can be documented: (a) the early Vedic offering (*dāna*, *dakṣiṇā*), (b) the gift freely given out of one's surplus to a beggar or mendicant monk, from around the fifth century B.C. (*bhikṣā*), (c) the ritualized obligatory gift bestowed out of a sense of moral duty and indebtedness (*r̥ṇa*), the highpoint being from around the third century A.D. (*dāna*). Only in the later stages do these three forms mix. Alms, however, cannot be documented for the early Vedic period, any more than ritualized obligatory gifts in the sense mentioned can for the time of the Buddha.

* There are, correspondingly, manifold motives for the gifts, which Mauss has reduced primarily to the one motive of expecting a return gift. Gifts were given out of compassion to beggars and the needy, as compensatory gifts to accompany the dead, as a reward or payment for religious services, as presents meant to stabilize or call into question social relations (suitable vs. unsuitable presents), as presents (to men and gods) to inspire good will, friendship or loyalty, as diplomatic presents²² in confirmation of a covenant, as thank offerings for healing, as supplicatory offerings for the harvest, as religious gifts made for religious merit or to cancel ritual offence, or as obligatory ritual gifts. Mauss reduces all of this more or less to contractual legalisms.

As we can see, *dānadharma* is far more complex than Mauss's treatment of it would suggest. Any theory of Indian gift-giving based on Mauss alone is highly reductive. Mauss himself confessed as much, but at the same time viewed the *dānadharma* of the Brahmins as a relic of a previously widespread form of economic exchange.

The reservations mentioned above notwithstanding, we may claim a firm hold on the essential features of this *dānadharma*. In the interest of fairness, I base myself primarily on the sources Mauss used. There are seven criteria:

- (1) A *dāna* should be given to a worthy recipient.²³ He should, for example, be a knower of the Veda (*śrotriya*, *snātaka*), or at least be living as an ascetic, and thus be dependent on begging for his teacher, for his study of the Veda and for himself (Manu mentions looking after one's own medical needs). If this is so, religious merit (*puṇya*) accrues to the giver. There are detailed lists of the hierarchies of merit resulting from *dāna* (for example, in Agni 209.34ff.), and these are based on the status of the recipient: If the gift is given to a Vaiśya (!), the merit is fourfold; if to a Brahmin, sixteenfold; if to a knower of the Veda, hundredfold etc. (cf. Manu VII.85-86). The more ascetic the Brahmin, the worthier he is; the *śrotriya* is held to be the best priest, since he receives no gifts (cf. ŚBr XIII.4.3.14). Not even an insignificant

gift should be given to a self-centred or hypocritical Brahmin, or to one ungrounded in the Veda.²⁴

- (2) A *dāna* must be given in a liberal spirit, without attending to or speculating about advantages or benefits (Manu IV.247-250; Agni 109.29-33; BhG 17.20-22). Thus Hemādri in the *Caturvargaciṇṭāmaṇi* cites a verse from the legal scholar (*dharmaśāstrin*) Devala, who stresses that one should not expect benefits (*anapekṣya prayojanam*), only that it be a moral *dāna* (*dharma-dāna*) given in a free spirit (*tyāgabuddhyā*) to one who is a worthy recipient (*pātra*).²⁵
- (3) Giving and receiving are formalized with respect to time, place, cardinal direction, type of gift etc. (cf. Agni 209.1-21). The term for the act of acceptance is *pratigraha*, which in later times is allowed only to Brahmins.²⁶

“Simple acceptance is not *pratigraha* [legal, ritualized acceptance]. The previous ‘he accepts’ applies only to a special [form] of acceptance. Acceptance becomes *pratigraha* when a ritual formula is first spoken and when the mental attitude does not centre on visible [profit].”²⁷

If the transaction is not carried out ritually, it is not only ineffective for the giver but also fateful for the recipient. For then it would be simple payment instead of a religious offering.

- (4) *Dāna* harbours the danger of defilement, which a worthy recipient is able to withstand or, as the texts put it, digest (Manu X.102). The danger associated with a *dāna* has to do primarily with the gift, and not, as both Mauss and his critics assumed, so much with the giver. The question of who gives the *dāna*²⁸ is, in fact, hardly discussed in Manu, whereas who may or should receive it most definitely is. The dangers or benefits of particular gifts are recorded, for example, in Manu IV.186-191 and IV.228-233. Accordingly, the recipient is threatened with the loss of his knowledge or his power (*tejas*, *tapas*) if he accepts too much or in a ritually incorrect manner. The benefit depends on the type of *dāna*: light (*dīpa*) causes good eyesight, gold causes long life etc. (Manu IV.228-35, Agni 120.1ff.; see also Acharya 1993).

Thus improper gifts, bad gifts and gifts in general may be a trap—a Trojan horse, a gift of the Danae²⁹ or Pandora's box.³⁰ The double meaning of German *Gift* (poison) and English *gift* (Mauss 1924) is not accidental.

- (5) *Dāna* creates religious merit for the giver if it is given out of a *dharma*-centred motive; this confers unseen merit (*adr̥ṣṭaphala*), in contrast to merit that involves personal profit (*dṛṣṭaphala*), in gifts given with mundane purposes in mind (*artha*, *kāma*, *vriḍā*, *harṣa* or *bhaya*³¹). It is not a question of *dāna* where there is a *quid pro quo*, where accounts are kept on both sides, but rather of worldly affairs. Only where there is no reciprocity is it truly a *dāna*, that is, a gift for which a service in return is immaterial—namely, religious merit. The obligation to return in kind is set aside, and in some cases explicitly ruled out. It is here that Mauss's reference in his footnote applies: when during *śrāddha* Brahmins are invited with whom some relationship or another exists—marriage, blood kinship, a relationship of priest to sponsor of sacrifices, and one of teacher to disciple are named as examples in ĀpDhS II.7.17.4 (cf. Manu III.141, Mbh 13.90.39)—then such a gift is demonic (*paiśāca*). Such gifts become extinct in this world—that is, do not reach the world beyond—because they pass mutually (*saṃbhojanī*) from house to house.
- (6) The transactions are hierarchical and asymmetrical: the giver is lower in rank than the recipient, but becomes higher in rank if, in giving a gift, he passes on impurity.
- (7) In times of emergency (*āpad*) these norms are set aside (Manu X.102-113). Then a Brahmin can accept almost anything from anybody.

On the whole Mauss is right when he writes: “The whole theory is even somewhat comical. The entire caste, which lives on gifts, claims to refuse them. Then it gives way and accepts those that have been spontaneously offered. Then it draws up long lists of the people from whom it can accept gifts, in what circumstances, and what kind

of things, going so far as to allow everything in the case of famine, subject, it is true, to minor acts of expiation being carried out" (Mauss 1990: 59).

One can also partially agree with his following conclusion, though it has been particularly subject to attack (Raheja 1988: 250-1): "This is because the bond established between the donor and recipient is too strong for both of them, as in all the systems we have studied previously, and here still more so, they are too closely linked with one another. The recipient puts himself in a position of dependence *vis-à-vis* the donor. This is why the Brahmin must not 'accept' gifts, and even less solicit them, from the king. A divinity among divinities, he is superior to the king, and would demean himself if he did anything other than take gifts."

And what about reciprocity, whose absence Mauss noted in the footnote with wonder? Mauss himself left it at that, and merely refers to the strong bonds between giver and recipient. Heesterman, Trautmann and Parry offer the spread of defilement, and Raheja that of inauspiciousness, as the reason for the lack of any return gift. And this is the point where I should like to step in with my criticism, in an attempt to partially rehabilitate Mauss.

For even if defilement is passed on in individual cases and certain contexts, particularly in the death ritual, it nevertheless falls short of being a general reason. In the first place, much ethnographic evidence bars the conclusion that defilement is passed on.³² Secondly—and both Raheja and van der Veer mention this—reciprocity is practised in cases in which a *dāna* is nothing more than a personally nonbinding payment (*dakṣiṇā*) for a ritual service—in other words, primarily for the so-called *yajmāni* transactions (see Fuller 1989: 33-63). And thirdly, a very crucial point is overlooked, I would say, when one's attention is restricted to the aspect of defilement: namely, the rise of a moral of liberality, that is, a moral of disinterested giving—the pure gift—which needs to be seen in the context of the rise of ascetic practice.

The *dānadharma* was developed in "a national economy where there were towns, markets, and money" (Mauss 1990: 58), in the

midst of a market-driven economy enjoying surpluses and, to a certain extent, luxuries, when one might have been led to say *pecunia olet*, when the Brahminical priest was already looking upon asceticism as his own ideal, and when, for this reason, gifts were binding or—*idealiter*—acceptable only when the giver also had an ascetic, pure status (see Gonda 1965: 211). Once this stage was reached—shall we say, with Gombrich (1988: 49-59), with the rise in influence of the merchant class during the time of the Buddha?—the gift became both a duty and a burden.

Whatever the reasons for the rise of asceticism in India (see Bronkhorst 1993), it most certainly is wrong to claim that it was due only to the fear that defilement was transferable. Once asceticism exists, the *quaestio de paupertate* arises (which occupied not only the Franciscans), and the question arises, too, of the immoral (because extravagant, greedy or avaricious) handling of property, as well as the immorality of possession for the religious specialist. Not giving but having acquires a bad name. From a salvational point of view, gifts should be nothing other than surrender, abandonment, the gift freely given, and the liberal spirit.

I should like to strengthen this hypothesis by way of one parallel, the rules of greeting according to the Dharmaśāstra. Giving, in fact, takes place during the act of greeting—in the Indian view, the giving of something material or at least something of subtly material, as we shall see. Why does a greeting have to be reciprocated, but a *dāna* not?

The Act of Greeting

A comparison of Hindu gift-giving with the rules of greeting in the Dharmaśāstra may seem far-fetched at first sight, but in the *Manusmṛti*, and the other texts Mauss refers to, it is all juxtaposed. There the rules for *dāna* are basically norms for proper behaviour on the part of the newly initiated twice-born. And it is there, or more properly on the basis of studies carried out on Hindu initiation (Michaels 1986: 189-224 and 1994b: 330-344), that I first came

across these parallels. Thus Manu IV.179-80 first treats the question of how one should act upon being insulted, then come the rules for accepting gifts, and the next subject is impermissible vows, etc. *Dānadharma* is “Recht und Sitte” (the title of Julius Jolly’s standard work on the Dharmaśāstra) and in parts, therefore, simple etiquette, as Mauss likewise notes: “The codes and the epic expiate upon the theme—as Hindu writers well knew how to do—that gifts, givers, and things given are terms to be considered relatively, after going into details and with scruples, so no error is committed in the way one gives and receives. It is all a matter of etiquette; it is not like in the market where, objectively, and for price, one takes something” (Mauss 1990: 59). Parallels to the rules of greeting are themselves hinted at by Mauss: “The invitation must be returned, just as ‘courtesies’ must” (Mauss 1990: 65). Courtesies are for him a part of the total number of transfers (*préstations totales*) that may occur, as services, in place of gifts in the system of total social phenomena (*phénomènes sociaux totaux*).

A comparison with the rules of greeting will serve to moderate the discussion of Hindu gift-giving and its obsession with the purity of the gift—no doubt a consequence of Louis Dumont’s great influence. But before I present the distinctive features of these rules, a word of caution is again in order: the sources of the Dharmaśāstra hardly suffice to advance a theory of greeting, much less one of propriety.³³ Exact knowledge of the field of interaction is required for greeting gestures, forms of address, order of address and the like to have a forceful effect. They may elicit varying responses within the narrowest confines depending upon social rank, age, sex, profession or standing.³⁴

Within the rules of greeting in the Dharmaśāstra (cf. Kane 1968/II.1: 334ff.), seven features again stand out:

- (1) The greeting must be directed to a worthy recipient. Of focal concern among the rules of greeting is the status of greeter and greeted. Status is measured according to the following criteria, in rising order: “Wealth, kinship relation, age, deeds (Manu XII.1-11) and, fifthly, knowledge [of *śruti* and *smṛti*] are the

basis for respect. . .”³⁵ The highest status is again enjoyed by the knower of the Veda, the *śrotriya*.

- (2) The greeting should be performed in a respectful frame of mind, as an expression of esteem towards the higher-ranking person (ĀpDhS I.4.14.10).
- (3) Greeting, acknowledgement of greeting, return greeting and greeting gestures are formalized. One is expected to stand during the greeting (*pratyutthāna*: Manu II.126), the words of greeting vary according to status and repute, and the form of greeting likewise varies according to the relationship between greeter and greeted. Thus, according to the *Atrisamhitā* (*Smṛticandrikā*, p. 38, resp. p. 62), the student should touch with his hands the feet of his teacher (*upasaṃgrahaṇa*) after a period of teaching and after sunset; one should greet the student of the Vedas and others with the *añjali* gesture (*namaskāra*), and another Brahmin with a raised right hand. According to ĀpDhS I.2.5.16, a Brahmin should greet a Kṣatriya with *añjali* at ear level, a Vaiśya at breast level, and a Śūdra at stomach level.³⁶

The speech forms are similarly prescribed in detail. The customary words: *abhivadaye devadatta śarmāham bhoḥ*,³⁷ where *devadatta śarman* fills in the blank of one’s own name, which is only inserted when the greeted person knows the formally correct return greeting: when the greeting of a member of one of the three upper classes is returned, the name must be lengthened at a fixed place (usually the last syllable) to three morae.

The great age of this rule is shown by Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (ca. 4th cent. B.C.): “If one returns the greeting of a non-Śūdra, then one uses *pluti*, namely for the final syllable of the sentence that represents the formulaic reply.”³⁸ This is normally the name of the person one has been greeted by. The Brahmin who is unfamiliar with the correct form of reply displays thereby his deficient education and should be treated like a Śūdra. For, as Patañjali makes clear in the *Mahābhāṣya*, one needs to have studied grammar in order to reply correctly:

One should talk as one pleases to those uneducated persons who, in returning a greeting, do not know the lengthened form of the name—as to women³⁹ after one has come back from a trip [and says], “Here I am.” (...) Grammar should be studied, [for] we do not wish, when greeting, to be like women [i.e. uneducated].

- (4) A misdirected or improper greeting—strangers, enemies, murderers, menstruating women, runners, persons who are drunk, eating, yawning, etc. (*Smṛticandrikā*, p. 39, resp. 67)—puts one at risk of being harmed and defiled. This applies also to misdirected or neglected greetings towards elders, for according to Manu II.120 and other sources the life breaths (*prāṇa*) escape upward in younger persons when they meet older ones. The former gain back the life breaths by rising and properly greeting—and also blessings for a long life, knowledge, fame and power. An impure person (such as one wearing shoes) should not greet, nor should one return with words the words of greeting of someone impure (*ĀpDhS* I.4.14.22). More comes out than mere words of greeting, in contrast to the mute gesture of the *namaskāra* greeting (see Kane 1968/II.1: 346).
- (5) The proper greeting produces religious merit. Conversely, the threat of loss of religious merit hangs over one who fails to follow the strict form. A one-armed greeting carries the loss of *punya*, as stated in the *Viṣṇusmṛti* (*Smṛticandrikā*, p. 62); whoever regularly greets elders, on the other hand, secures for himself a long life, religious merit, fame and power (Manu II.121).
- (6) The rules of greeting are hierarchically gradated according to social class. A Brahmin is not bound by duty to greet Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas before they greet him; on the contrary, even a ten-year-old Brahmin is a father with respect to a hundred-year-old Kṣatriya (Manu II.135) and must be greeted first. The *Smṛticandrikā* (p. 38, resp. p. 65) clarifies this passage by remarking that only Brahmins should be greeted, and that under no circumstances should a Brahmin (be the first) to greet Kṣatriyas

and others, even if the latter possess knowledge and have performed good deeds. Ascetics who are not greeted (first) by the king may cause harm. And sometimes ascetics do not bow to the gods, in order to demonstrate their equal rank. Thus, according to Nepalese chronicles, the priest-ascetic Nityānanda refused to bow to statues of two gods (Kāmadeva and Dharmasīlā), even though he had been enjoined to do so by King Śivasimhamalla (reigned ca. 1578-1619); when in the end he did, the statues burst, whereupon the king was barely able to prevent him from bowing down to Paśupati, the tutelary deity of Nepal.⁴⁰

Ritual rank thus takes precedence over seniority and power. But only in the case of oral greetings. The situation is different when it comes to standing up, which Brahmins are supposed to do upon meeting older persons, including Śūdras. Even if the priest, father-in-law or uncle is younger, one should stand, but should not address them (*Gautama* VI.9). The danger lies in the word, in the improper greeting formula. One could say that the danger lies in what is given, the word, for in the end we live in a world in which language, and more especially names, lay claim to an ethereal quality and influence. And if something is given, there is the duty to reciprocate, and this engenders dependency. But in spite of the ethereality of an oral greeting, there is no question, even in India, but that gift, present and exchange represent legal and commercial transactions that, though they are not necessarily constitutively binding, nevertheless involve the exchange of goods, whereas a greeting is an act that at most binds the second party morally, remaining outside the bounds of a commercial transaction.

- (7) Special rules apply in special circumstances—similar to the times of emergency under *dānadharma*. Thus even a Brahmin should make way when older or frail persons, porters and vehicles approach. Nonetheless, the rules for greeting evidently remain in force even in times of emergency.

As one can see, there are clear parallels between the rules for greeting and the norms for giving and receiving gifts (see table):

Gift Exchange (<i>dānadharma</i>)	Rules of Greeting (<i>abhivādana</i> -“ <i>dharma</i> ”)
The gifts must be given to a worthy recipient.	The greeting must be directed to a worthy recipient.
The gift must be given in a liberal spirit.	The greeting should be given with a feeling of respect.
Giving and receiving is formalized.	Greeting, acknowledgement of greeting and return greeting are formalized.
The gift harbours the risk of defilement.	An improper greeting harbours the risk of misfortune and defilement.
The gift produces religious merit for the giver.	A proper greeting produces religious merit for greeter and greeted.
The transactions are hierarchical.	The rules of greeting are hierarchically gradated according to class.
These norms are invalid in times of emergency (<i>āpad</i>).	Special regulations obtain in certain circumstances—comparable to times of emergency under <i>dānadharma</i> .

Gifts, Greetings and Liberality

The parallels between greeting and gift is not surprising, given that greetings concern the bonds between giver and recipient that Mauss spoke of, or conversely the maintenance of distance and the highlighting of status differences occasioned thereby. It is quite legitimate, in fact, to analyze greetings and gifts within the framework of a more global theory of behaviour and communication, as Pierre Bourdieu (1979) has done, for example, since only then will the rules of the game and the entire palette of communicative challenges and responses be spelt out. Every communicative act directed to someone else is, indeed, an “injury or questioning of their self-esteem”

and a “virtual dishonouring” (Bourdieu 1979: 22). No matter what one gives the other—gifts, words (of greeting), invitations, gestures or looks—one is exposing oneself to the receiver, in that one is providing him the choice between a culturally and socially accepted or unacceptable response.

A response is the norm. It may be appropriate or inappropriate, and those involved can determine from it their hierarchical, personal and emotional relationship. Whether remunerations to servants, tips, presents self-made or bought, lavish or unassuming, it always depends on the circumstances and the people involved whether the gift is felt to be appropriate or inappropriate. To be sure, in hierarchical relationships the gift need not necessarily be reciprocated; it is then an expression of the giver’s superiority—parents’ gifts to small children, gifts to the needy and the like—but these are the exceptions.

Between grown-ups and equals, on the other hand, it is not normal for gifts not to be reciprocated, or to be ignored or refused. When the giver exerts no pressure and, free of malice and envy, expects no gift in return, he gives with the often declared⁴¹ intention of neither needing gifts himself nor exchanging them in any way. This intent, in a religious context, is based on the giver’s search for the abnormal, uncommon, supernatural, it being the normal practice to reciprocate a communicative challenge; being able to allow oneself not to respond, not to return a gift, not to issue a return invitation, and not to greet but to look away and say nothing may be taken as a sign of the extraordinary. God is sufficient unto Himself. “God, nature and sun give freely, without requiring a gift in return,” writes Starobinski (1994: 74—borrowing from Seneca). And therefore one must often refrain from addressing, greeting (as the first), inviting or giving gifts to (in expectation of receiving others in return from) persons who claim or are treated as enjoying divine status—for example, saints, ascetics or god-kings.

A gift for which a return gift is neither given nor, by either party, expected—where, in other words, something is given but nothing received—is usually given out of generosity, the moral or religious merit for which is greater, the greater the altruistic motives behind

it are. To the extent, therefore, that religious or moral goals are sought in the exercise of generosity, there must be—this Mauss did not see clearly enough, and not only with respect to Hindu law—no requirement to reciprocate. Mauss and his critics, however, do not accept altruism as a motive for the giving of gifts,⁴² though this is the very motive required in the giving of *dānāni*.

According to Brahminical thought, in fact, merit accrues only in the context of a pure (*sāttvika*: BhG 17.20), disinterested and unmotivated bestowal. If one gives in expectation of receiving something in return, the gift is regarded as passional (*rājasa*: BhG 17.21) or even, when given to an unworthy recipient, as proper to the powers of darkness (*tāmasa*: BhG 17.22). And in the previously mentioned hierarchy of Hindu gifts, disinterested, unexpectant giving ranks highest, even if in fact real payment for priestly services performed is involved, when, that is, the *dānāni* already constitute the return gift for a service.

One may say that from a psychological point of view there can be no disinterested gifts, but it is at least generally recognized that interest in an agreed, expected or tangible return gift and return service is a hindrance to partaking of the world that is beyond such human calculation, since that world represents the opposite pole to it.

The return gift to a *dāna* is thus left ungiven not because the gift contains the giver's defilement but because ascetic generosity is the fundamental desideratum. Altruistic generosity, not to be confused with pity, is an ascetic virtue (and in some cases meant specifically for ascetics). In order to approximate the required motive of disinterestedness, the attitude of giver and receiver must be, as far as possible, not of this world.

One can observe this even today very clearly and memorably in the Hindu initiation (*upanayana*) in Nepal: The candidate for initiation, having been temporarily turned into an ascetic (*brahmacārin*), goes around to the invited guests—in a yellow-orange ascetic's robe and furnished only with a tiger's skin, walking stick and alms bowl—and collects the numerous handsome gifts for the house priest. Thus

the priest receives in essence alms, and is relieved of the duty to reciprocate.

One may say, with Dumont, that in India it is the rejection of gift and return gift that makes individuality possible, since each transaction binds the individual to the community, with sharing, reciprocal, conforming forms of activity being valued above egoistic and individualistic ones. Only one who no longer needs to give, take and exchange—the ascetic—is no longer a member of the community.

The above-mentioned authors justifiably point out that the best Brahmin is an ascetic: “In fact, the ideal brahmin is the renouncer” (Heesterman 1985: 43). But with respect to gifts, this means for the Brahmin either that he, as we have seen, had in fact to be an ascetic, and was thereby exempted from reciprocating, or else he had to declare the *dānāni* to be pure gifts, to be given without any claim to ideal or material equivalences, that is, to reciprocity.

Such a claim, of course, could only be raised and discharged if open-handedness already existed as a virtue, for which the alms (*bhikṣā*) given to ascetics provided the ideal case. And the virtue of open-handedness could only grow under conditions of wealth and surplus; it does not necessary presuppose, as Parry (1986: 466) would have it, a market economy. The virtue of open-handedness is a virtue of kings and the well-to-do.⁴³ And the theory of *dāna*, too, only arose with the rise of polycentric court-based power structures in India. The open-handedness that came under the particular purview of kings, the aristocracy and the rich softened unpleasant suspicions of illegitimate power and wealth. Wealth legitimates itself through open-handedness, endowments and patronage, not through avarice, extravagance or miserliness. Through acts of generosity and charity, a portion of the surpluses that have been generated in common but not shared equally is voluntarily redistributed. The ascetics grew into serious competition for the Brahmins, with regard not only to the true path to salvation but also to claims on the economic surplus. The Brahmins had every reason to praise the virtue of open-handedness (they lived from it), but they could be treated as worthy recipients only if they did not fall under the category of persons obliged to practice

open-handedness themselves, if—in other words—they themselves had no possessions to give away, if they themselves were, ideally, ascetics.

But what about the reciprocity of the greeting, the return greeting? Here there is a clear distinction vis-à-vis *dānadharma*, since the gestural return greeting (*pratyabhivāda*) is—except in the previously stipulated cases—definitely called for, whereas we were unable to find such reciprocity in the case of gift-giving. If one is greeted, one must respond in turn or at least stand up, even as a Brahmin. Otherwise one will go to hell, it is stated in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (according to *Smṛticandrikā*, p. 37, resp. p. 63). One who goes so far as not to return the greeting of a Brahmin will be reborn as a tree at a cremation site on which vultures and crows congregate (ibid.). And further it is stated that one shares the evil (*pāpa*) with the greeter if one does not return the greeting. The duty (*dharma*) to return greetings exists even towards a casteless Caṇḍala, to whom one should come back with *piba surāḥ* (“Drink schnapps!”). Given its function of showing peaceful intentions, ignoring a greeting amounts to an act of violence, an act of aggression or an insult, even as, conversely, greetings and return greetings are pacifying gestures.⁴⁴

If it were only a question of personal duty and hierarchy, too strong bonds and the fear of transferred defilement, similar reservations ought to have crystallized around the return of greetings. For, as we have seen, the greeting may also contain impureness and be dangerous. But since this did not occur, the reasons must be of a material nature. “This is because the bond established between donor and recipient”—this Mauss (p. 115) correctly saw—“is too strong for both of them [i.e. the Brahmins]” (Mauss 1990: 59). But not because the recipient enters into a state of dependency, and even less because defilement, harm or the like are always contained in the gift, but because the gift, in contrast to the greeting, is a good of gross material nature, an equivalent return on which the Brahmin can only be excused from when he himself is an ascetic or the motive for the gift is an ascetic one. Significantly, the whole problematical complex

does not exist in the case of offerings, for these gifts go to gods, not to men!

That this argumentative construction is shaky may be conceded, but this has to do with the paradox (Heestermann) or conundrum (Trautmann) that the Brahmin wants to be man and “God”; it is inherent in the nature of the matter. Are there pure gifts, or is this a contradiction in terms? Did not—and again I am indebted to Starobinski (1994: 170) for this thought—the first human gift, Eve’s apple, contain poison (*German Gift*)? Are there—let each ask himself—truly convincing gestures of generosity? Is there not some vain self-interest in every gift and contribution, even if they are discreetly put in the collection bag or anonymously transferred at the banking counter? And is it coincidental that nowadays “generosity” and charitable “brotherly love” have been replaced by “solidarity” (with the poor, the needy, the Third World), a notion masking the condescension that the gift, given as it is in a situation of inequality, signifies?⁴⁵

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¹ This article is based on the manuscript of a lecture I delivered in December 1994 at Heidelberg University. On the train trip to Heidelberg I read in a discarded copy of the Berne newspaper *Der Bund* (“The bond”) a review of a book by Jean Starobinski (1994). At the time I had no idea how close my theses were to those of this author, who has viewed the theory of gift-giving in an even broader context than I propose here.

² “The only riches you always have are those you will have given.”

³ Quoted from memory.

⁴ See now, for example, Grafton 1995.

⁵ Concerning this “remarkable footnote” (Trautmann) see also van der Veer 1988: 192ff.

⁶ In the *L'Année sociologique* of 1909 Mauss levelled scathing criticism at van Gennep’s *Rites de passage*. He nevertheless, it seems to me, received from him

some fundamental impulses (if not the theory itself) for his analysis of gift-giving. Van Gennep's sentence "Exchanges have a direct constraining effect: to accept a gift is to be bound to the giver" (1960: 29) could have come from Mauss's own pen.

⁷ Still as instructive as ever for the questions this semantic field poses: Grimm 1865.

⁸ Mauss himself does not use such terminology in his essay. An enlightening discussion of this point is found in Znoj 1995: 58-64.

⁹ It is the exception, however, for a Brahmin to have to pass on a gift; the practice applies only to impure gifts. Parry seems to have been too occupied with priests and conditions at cremation sites in Benares; cp. Fuller 1984: 68.

¹⁰ See, for example, G. Simmel 1989: Chapter 4 and pp. 719-723.

¹¹ See particularly the first section of *Das Kapital*, "Ware und Geld," pp. 49-160.

¹² As Aristotle, for example, expressed (*Politeia* I.8-11); for ancient sentiment concerning gifts and generosity, see Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV), Cicero (*De officiis*, Books II, XV-XX) and particularly Seneca's treatise on charitable acts (*De beneficiis*).

¹³ See in this regard particularly Jacque Le Goff 1992.

¹⁴ In Mauss's Sanskrit citations, rendered without diacritical marks, there are so many mistakes that it is impossible to correct them all here. Particularly bothering, though, is the citation from the *Mahābhārata* in fn. 62, which according to the critical Poona edition (13.61.32) ought to read: *mām eva dattha mām dattha mām dattvā mām avāpsyatha* (rather than "*mamevadattha, ma dattha, mam dattva mamevapasya*"). Mauss also apparently failed to grasp the meaning of the fundamental Maori concept *hau* (see Znoj 1995: 37-43).

¹⁵ The extensive legal compendiums have so far scarcely been taken note of: Lakṣmīdhara's *Kṛtyakalpataru* (Dānakhaṇḍa), Ballālasena's *Dānasāgara* and Hemādri's *Caturvargaciṇṭāmaṇi* (Dānakhaṇḍa), or also the *Agnipurāṇa*, ch. 209.

¹⁶ Particularly P. V. Kane 1968ff., K.V.R. Aiyangar in his introduction to the edition of the Dānakhaṇḍa of Lakṣmīdhara's *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Gonda 1965: 198-228 and, recently, Nath 1987 as well as Acharya 1993.

¹⁷ See particularly Fuller and van der Veer, *loc. cit.*

¹⁸ He uses *présent*, *cadeau* and *don* practically synonymously.

¹⁹ Gonda (1965) translates *dāna* on numerous occasions correctly as "liberality," which refers to the attitude in giving and not to the gift itself.

²⁰ See Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*. Delhi 1978.

²¹ For the Purāṇas see Acharya 1993.

²² See, for example, *Arthaśāstra* 9.6.23-25, where the context is that of dangers involved with traders and enemies: *lubdhaṃ kṣiṇaṃ vā tapasvimukhyāvasthāpanāpūrvaṃ dānena sādhayet. (23) tatpañcavidham—deyavisargo grhitānuvartanamātāpra-*

tidānaṃ svadravyadānaṃ apūrvam parasveṣu svayaṃgrāhadānaṃ ca. (24) iti dāna-karma. (25) Cf. also Arthaśāstra 9.7.66-72.

²³ Manu XI.1-6, IV.192-200, III.128-137, VII.85-86; Kane 1968/II.2: 845.

²⁴ Manu IV.192 talks of Brahmins who behave like cats, and the commentator Kullūka describes them as underhanded and heretical (*pāṣāṇḍin*) men who go about their business in secret places (*vikarmasthāna*).

²⁵ *arthānāṃ udite pātre śraddhayā [v.l. yathāvat] pratipādam / dānaṃ ity abhinirīḍiṣṭaṃ vyākhyānaṃ tasya kathyate // [. . .] pātrebhyo dīyate nityam anapekṣya prayojanam / kevalam tyāgabuddhyā yad dharmadānaṃ tat ucyate // (Caturvargacīṇṭāmaṇi (Dānakhaṇḍa), p. 13-14).*

²⁶ *Arthaśāstra 1.3.5-8 (cf. Manu X.75ff.): svadharmo brāhmaṇasyādhyayanam adhyāpanam yajanam yājānaṃ dānaṃ pratigrahaś ca. (5) kṣatriyasādyayanam yajanam dānaṃ śāstrājīvo bhūtarakṣaṇam ca. (6) vaiśyasyādhyayanam yajanam dānaṃ kṛṣipāśupālye vanijyā ca. (7) sūdrasya dvijātisūśrūṣā vārttā kārukuśilavakarma ca. (8) According to Manu VII.85 and Agni 209.34ff., however, other social ranks may also receive dānāni. See also Raheja's (1988) detailed analysis of gifts and other ritual specialists; Raheja 1989 is a summary of her theses.*

²⁷ *naiva grahaṇamātram pratigrahaḥ. viśiṣṭa eva svikāre pratipūrvo grhṇāti var-tate. adṛṣṭabuddhayā mantrapūrvam grhṇataḥ pratigraho bhavati (Medhātithi on Manu IV.5). On pratigraha see also Gonda 1965: 210.*

²⁸ Manu IV.226-7, IV.31-32, Agni 109.34-48.

²⁹ Vergil, *Aeneis* (II.48): *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, "I fear the Greeks, even when they bring gifts."

³⁰ For an impressive treatment of this, see Starobinski 1994: 60-70.

³¹ *Kṛtyakalpataru*, pp. 5-6; cf. Trautmann 1981: 45, 280.

³² See the evidence in Fuller 1984: 68. Even Raheja (1988: 46) says that up to a certain point defilement cannot be transferred at all; it is only washed away or after a while goes away by itself. For a discussion of Raheja's theses, see Toffin (1990: 130-42), Quigley (1993: 68-86) and Milner 1994: 132ff.

³³ See in this regard the bibliography of Knuf 1990/91 and Bergmann 1994.

³⁴ Thus in 1930, according to the atlas of German folk customs, the higher-ranking person (e.g. pastor or teacher) was the first to greet in certain parts of Westphalia and Lippe, whereas in the entire surrounding area, and in Central Europe as a whole, it was incumbent upon the lower-ranking person to greet first: Schürmann 1994: 198ff.

³⁵ *vittaṃ bandhur vayah karma vidyā bhavati pañcamī / etāni mānyasthānāni gariyo yadyad uttaram // (Manu II.136; cf. Yājñavalkyasmṛti I. 116)*

³⁶ One incidental fruit of past readings: in the Nepālī *Svasthānī* [-*vratakathā*] (Chap. 6, p. 63), Pārvati (or Sati) greets Śiva by bowing down with her whole body,

touching Śiva's feet and then performing the *añjali* gesture with her hands (*Satīdevī duvaikā caraṇamā sāṣṭāṅg praṇām garera añjali bāmdhera khadā bhairāhe*). This continues to be the most respectful manner of greeting higher-ranking persons in India.

³⁷ ĀpDhS I.2.5.12, Gautama VI.5, Manu II.122, 124.

³⁸ *vākyaśya ṭeḥ pluta udāttaḥ. pratyabhivāde 'śūdre. (Aṣṭādhyāyī 8.2.82-3).*

³⁹ For them *svasti* is sufficient.

⁴⁰ Cf. Michaels 1994a: 118 with references.

⁴¹ For most *dānāni* a prior formal, orally expressed resolution (*saṃkalpa*) is necessary for their beneficial effect to be felt.

⁴² Trautmann (1981: 179): "there is a show of altruism, but it is only show."

⁴³ Lat. *largitio* (and, in part, Ital. *larghezza* and Fr. *largesse*) signifies primarily "the generous acts of charity performed by princes and the more significant persons of a province or a city" (Starobinski 1994: 18).

⁴⁴ Van Gennepe (1960: 32f.) interprets the returned greeting as a rite of affiliation.

⁴⁵ This is the last footnote, not that it is needed, but for form's sake.

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CULTURE CONTACT AND VALUATION: EARLY GERMAN BUDDHISTS AND THE CREATION OF A 'BUDDHISM IN PROTESTANT SHAPE'

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Summary

This paper handles the question concerning the factors that control the degree of adaptability of a transplanted religion spread in a culturally alien context. It will be argued that the assumed superiority of both one's religion and one's culture are decisive factors for the willingness to adapt or to refuse adaptation. The theoretical issues will be illustrated by the adoption of Buddhism by its early German followers. Thus, the paper gives a brief survey of the historical development of the adoption of Buddhism in Germany. Characteristics of the early phases will be outlined as well as the state of affairs of Buddhism in Germany in the 1990's. Most remarkable is Buddhism's rapid growth which increased the number of Buddhist centres and groups fivefold since the mid 1970's.

On the basis of this historic description a particular line of interpreting Buddhist teachings, that of a rational understanding, is outlined. The analysis of this adoption of Buddhism seeks to show that early German Buddhists interpreted and moulded Buddhist teachings in such a way as to present it as being in high conformity with Western morals and culture. This high degree of adapting Buddhist teachings led to an interpretation which can be characterized as a 'Buddhism in Protestant shape.' Buddhism was used as a means of protest against the dominant religion, that of Christianity, but at the same time its proponents took over many forms and characteristics of the religion criticized most heavily.

Modes of culture contact and the encounter of religions have become a topic of increasing interest within social science. Little attention, however, has been paid to the variables which influence the forms of contact and the degree of adaptability of a transplanted religion. In order to further such considerations, the exposition will concentrate on the acculturative processes of the transplanted religion; the various host culture's adaptive reactions have to be left aside. Our theoretical reflections will be illustrated by the adoption of Buddhism in Germany in late 19th and early 20th century. In ad-

dition, information with regard to recent Buddhist developments and figures will be provided. The article intends to show that "Turning East" marked Buddhists as religious dissenters, but, at the same time, life-style, modes of interpretation and ways of evaluation made them appear as social and cultural consenters.

Culture Contact and Valuation

The Problem

Encounters of cultures and religions are not a modern phenomenon. Processes of migration and the transplantation of religious traditions by means of missionary and other efforts are observable throughout history. For the present time, taking the example of Asian people settling in Western countries, one may point to the forced migration of Laotian Buddhists to France¹ or to Vietnamese Buddhists in the United States, France and Germany.² To a large extent, in cases of flight, religion primarily serves to strengthen the ethnic identity and retain the cultural heritage of the refugees. Only after a certain amount of time, for example within the third generation of migrants, might the paramount function of *survival* shift to ambitions of spreading the religion beyond the confines of the religious-cultural community.³

Such cases of culture contact and retention in the diasporic situation are, however, much too complex to be dealt with briefly. Rather, the considerations will concentrate on the second main case of culture contact, that of missionary efforts. Missionary activities should encompass principally the sending out of specially trained people such as priests or pastors to far away shores and peoples. Their aim and function is to spread the special religious message, e.g. the Gospel or the *Dharma*. They intend to convert the so-called pagans, heathens or Gentiles to the new faith. In addition, within missionary activities forms of scriptural or textual transference will be included. This pattern will be found when a foreign religion is spread by texts, i.e. by translations and through expositions of the new religion in journals, booklets and so forth. The adoption of Buddhist teachings in

Germany during the 19th and early 20th century is a paradigmatic example of this.⁴

In most cases the concepts and practices of the transplanted religion appear foreign to members of the host culture. The religious contents seem difficult to comprehend, the rituals might create a strange or exotic impression. In order to facilitate understanding, missionaries develop expedient means to make the contents and forms look less foreign and more familiar. Various strategies of adaptation are devised in order to mediate the new teachings and by this to win first and further converts. Such adaptive strategies cover, for example, emphasizing and reinterpreting particular elements of one's own tradition, leaving aside certain concepts which might still be difficult to grasp. Further strategies might be the adoption of new forms and features prevalent in the host culture, leading to processes of assimilation, absorption and acculturation.⁵

The degree of a religion's ability to adapt varies considerably. What are the factors which control this degree of openness for ambiguities and adaptations of a transplanted, missionary religion?

Two contrasting examples taken from the history of Christianity may illustrate the problem. In the early 17th century, Jesuit missionaries in China modified Catholic teaching in line with existing Confucian practice to a large extent. The readiness for ambiguities proved to be so far-reaching, however, that these adaptations were finally withdrawn by papal order from Rome.⁶ In contrast, Christianity in Ceylon from the 16th to mid-20th century showed a rather low degree of adaptation. Catholic and Protestant missionaries thought their religion and culture unquestionably superior to Buddhism. Richard Gombrich states that "the missionaries were crippled by their inflexibility;" they made no concessions to local custom and more often than not offended monks and lay Buddhists.⁷ Religious exclusivism and cultural paternalism went hand in hand.⁸ These examples indicate that a religion *per se* does not necessarily have a low or a high degree of adaptability. Rather, the degree shifts according to the situation.

Assumed Superiority of one's Religion and Culture as Decisive Factors

A religion's preparedness to allow for ambiguities and to be receptive to new forms and contents is determined by factors such as the particularities of the transplantation process and the peculiarities of the sociopolitical condition of the host society.⁹ Furthermore, the evaluation of religious elements of the host culture and their possible adoption depends—to a large extent—on the self-assessment of superiority of the transplanted religion. As a religion with missionary ambitions, such an assumed superiority will be the fundament of every proselytizing religion. Hence, factors other than this assumed religious superiority must determine the degree of adaptability.

A decisive factor seems to be the valuation and assessment of the foreign culture in relation to the religion's home culture. In other words: If the self-assessed religious superiority is coupled with a similar feeling on the cultural, ethnic or national level, then the missionaries' willingness to take up indigenous features of the foreign culture will be low. Rather, believing themselves to be bringing a so-called 'more advanced' culture and religion, the missionaries aim to lift these people considered 'less advanced' to the stage of so-called 'civilization.' Thus, missionaries reject existing customs and try to replace them. The history of missionary work during colonialism provides evident examples of assumed superiority and an unwillingness, if not refusal, to adapt.¹⁰

On the other hand, if missionaries encounter a culture valued to be of equal rank to their own culture, a low degree of rejection and exclusivism is observable. Rather, the missionaries take up existing elements as expedient means. The Christian endeavours in China and later in Japan are illustrative examples of this perspective.¹¹

These theoretical considerations of culture contact and valuation shall be illustrated by example of the adoption of Buddhism in Germany. Furthermore, the creation of a particular line of interpreting Buddhist teachings, coined as a 'Buddhism in Protestant shape,' shall be analysed. Before engaging in such an analysis, however, we will outline the context and history of Buddhism in Germany.

Buddhism in Germany: A Historical Sketch

Beginnings: the Discovery of Buddhism through Texts and Translations

In contrast to the North American and Australian experience, the first Buddhists in Germany—and generally in Europe—had not been labour migrants from Asia (i.e. Japan and China),¹² but European converts. The discovery of the teachings of the Buddha began through philosophical treatises and philological translations in the 18th and early 19th century. In Germany, it was particularly through the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) that artists, academics and intellectuals became interested in Buddhist philosophy and ethics. In addition, following Burnouf's outstanding presentation of Buddhist history in 1844,¹³ further studies and translations paved the way for an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the teachings. Frankly speaking, Buddhism was not sent from abroad, but it was fetched from within by Western orientalists. Pull rather than push factors prevailed.

Hermann Oldenberg's (1854-1920) *Buddha. His Life, his Doctrine, his Order* (1881/Engl. 1882) served to popularize Buddhism more than any other work at that time. Oldenberg's groundwork was followed by the important translations of the indologist Karl Eugen Neumann (1865-1915). The Theosophical Society (founded 1875) increased the interest in Eastern religions. In addition, the *Buddhist Catechisms* of Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907, published 1881) and Friedrich Zimmermann (1851-1917, published under the pseudonym Subhadra Bhikshu in 1888) as well as Sir Edwin Arnold's poetry *The Light of Asia* (1879) reached a widespread audience.

In Germany, the first Buddhists had been so-called 'self-converted followers of the teaching.' These had been either Paul Carus or Karl Eugen Neumann. Both took up a Buddhist worldview by way of reading, especially the treatises of Schopenhauer. Carus (1852-1919), son of a Protestant pastor, seems to have been a Buddhist as early as 1880, as his publication *Songs of a Buddhist* (1882) show.¹⁴ Neumann, son of a music director and a Hungarian aristocrat, embraced

Buddhism in 1884 and dedicated his life to the translation of the Pāli canon.¹⁵

The growing interest in Buddhist ethics and philosophy gained momentum organisationally, as in 1903 Dr. Karl Seidenstücker (1876-1936) founded the first Buddhist Society in Europe, the 'Society for the Buddhist Mission in Germany' (in Leipzig). It was a non-affiliated society of lay Buddhists, who's members joined by signing a confirmation.¹⁶ During the following decade, further organisations were established, although often short-lived.¹⁷

The adoption had been dominated by ethical and intellectual interests in the teaching of Southern and Theravāda Buddhism. Cognitive and rational contents of the teachings were stressed. These served as formal point of entry to Buddhist religion. Buddhism was praised as the "religion of reason,"¹⁸ the religion which alone rested on insight and knowledge.¹⁹ In pamphlets, books and public lectures, the first professed Buddhists tried to win members from the educated middle and upper class. The Buddhist circles and societies remained numerically small and were seen as more or less strange and exotic. In fact, many of these early Buddhists approached Buddhism as little more than a hobby which left their lives, in all other respects, unchanged.²⁰

Shift: from Thought to Practice

After the first world war, attitudes changed. Instead of establishing societies, Buddhists now founded *parishes*. The teachings were not only to be conceived by the mind, but also to be applied to the whole person. Religious practices such as worship, spiritual exercises, and devotional acts became part of Buddhist life during the Weimar Republic.

In 1921, Georg Grimm (1868-1945), a former Catholic judge, together with Seidenstücker initiated the 'Buddhist Parish for Germany.' The parish saw itself expressly as a religious community of lay Buddhists; lectures held by Grimm were attended by about 500 to, occasionally, 1,000 listeners. In 1924, Dr. Paul Dahlke (1865-1928), a doctor, built a 'Buddhist House.' There he led the same kind of

ascetic and religious life as the South Asian Buddhist monks. Two years later a Buddhist temple was attached to the house.²¹

National Socialism and the subsequent World War II put an end to the young Buddhist movement.²² The post-war period saw, however, its reconstruction: former Theravāda oriented groups were re-established and many new circles founded. In addition, other Buddhist traditions and schools began to flourish in West Germany: Tibetan Buddhism won its first followers through the establishment of the Western branch of the 'Arya Maitreya Mandala' in Berlin in 1952.²³ Japanese Shin Buddhism was established in Berlin in 1956 and Zen Buddhism became known through the writings of Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966) and Eugen Herrigel (1884-1955).

During the sixties, a considerable change could be seen in the way that members and interested people wanted to experience Buddhism spiritually and physically. Meditation became very popular. A longing for the East was apparent in those days, a search for mystical and spiritual experiences. Courses in *vipassanā* meditation (Theravāda tradition) and Zen meditation were booked up well in advance. Zen seminars (*sesshins*) took place in increasing numbers; Japanese teachers (*Rōshis*) came over from Japan to guide the newly founded Zen groups. This trend has been followed by a wide interest in Vajrayāna Buddhism since the late 1970's. Many members of the protest and 'alternative' movements of the late sixties were and still are fascinated by Tibetan Buddhist rituals and symbols.

The emerging interest in meditation, and spiritual and devotional Buddhist practices since the mid-sixties, has resulted in a broadening of the social group from which the Buddhists come: in the early phases, it was the established upper and better-educated stratum of society that was addressed. A much larger section of the population has since found its way into Buddhist centres and lectures. A considerable number of adherents, however, still belong to the middle classes; they are people in the caring professions, academics, and students. The average age varies considerably: many who are in their twenties are to be found in the Vajrayāna groups. The Karma-Kagyü centres affiliated to Ole and Hannah Nydahl, in particular, seem to

attract young people from the 'alternative scene.' The members of the Theravāda groups are in their fifties or older. The average age of practitioners of Zen is between 25 and 40 years of age.²⁴

Changes and State of Affairs

On a one hundred year scale, a considerable change is to be noted in the change of Buddhist traditions which were adopted: up to the 1950s it was a Pāli- and Theravāda Buddhism, enriched by the first groups of Mahāyāna Buddhism, that was predominant. In the 1960s and 1970s, there followed the so-called 'Zen boom.' In the 1980s and early 1990s, one could speak of a 'Vajrayāna boom.'

The rapid growth can numerically be accounted for. Although the actual numbers of sympathizers and members of Buddhist groups are rarely known, the growth can be illustrated by the increase of Buddhist organisations and groups. During the last two decades, the number of centres and communities have grown *fivefold* from less than 40 in 1975 to more than 200 in 1991. Especially the Tibetan traditions were able to set up centres and to found local groups all over Germany. Related to the number of Buddhist communities and organisations in Germany, Vajrayāna Buddhists maintained 80 centres (40% of the whole) in 1991, followed by Mahāyāna Buddhists, mainly Zen practitioners, running 61 centres (30.3%). Buddhist institutions of Pāli canon orientation (Theravāda) and institutions of non traditional affiliation only come up to 28 (14%) and 19 (10%) groups respectively.²⁵

The size and membership regulations of the groups and organisations, however, vary considerably. They range from as few as a dozen members to as many as several thousand in a main organisation. In addition, sociologically speaking, during the two recent decades, one was and still is able to follow the process of institutionalization of transplanted religious traditions. Groups and centres have to be founded in order to win converts and to get a firm footing. And in addition, in Germany and more generally in Europe, Buddhism is praised as the "trend religion" of the 1990s. Newspaper and

magazine articles, films and movies promote and awake a widespread interest.²⁶

In addition to an estimated 40,000 German Buddhists, since the late 1970s Asian Buddhists live in Germany. They number approximately 110,000 and are made up of Vietnamese 'boat people,' refugees from Tibet, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka, as well as students and businessmen from Korea and Japan. As a result, almost all Asian Buddhist traditions can be found in Germany. Buddhism in Germany makes up a multi-traditional picture with a firm organisational, although, at present yet, numerically small grounding.

The Creation of a 'Buddhism in Protestant Shape'

Types of Buddhist Sympathizers and Adherents

In his thorough study of the *American Encounter with Buddhism* (1992), Thomas A. Tweed set up a threefold typology of Euro-American Buddhist Sympathizers and Adherents.²⁷ He distinguished the romantic, esoteric and rationalist type for the timespan 1875 to 1912 in America. Such motives and backgrounds for taking on the Buddhist worldview are also traceable in Europe, suggesting a fruitful transference of Tweed's types to the British and German situation for the same time.²⁸

The *romantic* or "exotic-culture"²⁹ follower is drawn to a particular Buddhist tradition and its aesthetic forms, for example to Japanese arts, gardens and calligraphy. According to Tweed, "these nineteenth-century sympathizers tended to study the culture of a particular Buddhist nation and even adopt some of its customs."³⁰ They had links with the Romantic movement and laid an emphasis on feeling and exploration of imagination.³¹ The type of the *esoteric* follower shares a "belief in a spiritual or nonmaterial realm that is populated by a plurality of nonhuman or suprahuman realities that can be contacted."³² In Germany, such esoteric Buddhists had been members of the Theosophical Society or of similar spiritualist circles. In my estimation, esoteric followers are, in contrast to Tweed's findings for America,³³

less frequently found in Germany than the third type, the rationalist one. *Rationalists*, who “focused on rational-discursive means of attaining religious truth and meaning as opposed to revelational or experiential means,”³⁴ comparatively speaking are the most numerous followers among early German Buddhists.

The following sections will concentrate on this rationalist type and on the interpretations drawn up by its most prominent representatives. It should be kept in mind that this line of rationalist interpretation, which was dominant in Germany from about 1880 to about 1914, did continue. Today it is, however, just one particular line of understanding among a broad variety of interpretations of Buddhism.

Creating a Particular Line

The beginnings of a rationalist understanding began with attention being paid to Buddhism as a philosophy and a ‘doctrine of wisdom’ (*Weisheitslehre*). Schopenhauer’s interest in Buddhist teachings had an especially lasting effect. In the romantic and cultural perspective, German Buddhists of the first generation stressed the progressive and emancipatory aspects of Buddhism. In their opinion, this pure theory of knowledge, this “true teaching of reality,”³⁵ gives definite guidelines to the leading of a moral life. It provides its followers with a coherent conception of the world which alone rests on reason and personal experiences. Thus, Buddhism was praised as a scientific and analytical religion which did not contradict the findings of modern science. Rather, it confirmed the results of modern biology or physics. It reconciled science, philosophy and religion and thus amounted to the religion of the modern age. The rationalist interpretations accentuated the radical responsibility of self and focused on the ability to comprehend the teachings intellectually.³⁶

Following this line of interpretation, in the early 1960’s, the Buddhist Felix Knobeloch argued that this cognitive approach to the teachings of Buddha had developed to a point where it was the specific form of Buddhism in Germany.³⁷ A ‘German Buddhism’ would be grounded on reason, logic and rational knowledge. It would be

a “mathematical religion.” The rational system of thoughts would be based purely on the contents given in the Pāli canon. The canon as the scripture of authority would be a version “purged” of later interpretations and thus would restore the “original teachings” of the Buddha.³⁸

Such conceptions of a rationalist, mathematical ‘German Buddhism’ were critically commented on by contemporary Buddhists. Replying to these attempts to define a ‘German Buddhism’, Lionel Stützer (1901-1991), a member of the above mentioned Buddhist order ‘Arya Maitreya Mandala,’ stressed other typical characteristics of a ‘German Buddhism:’ “There are: quarrelsomeness, self-opinionatedness, quibbling, know-all manner but also eagerness in research, diligence, and seriousness.”³⁹ Stützer called followers of this line of rationalist interpretation “drawing-room Buddhists . . . who for most of the time would only do scholarly abstractions and contemplations, comparisons and intellectual excursions, and who would shy away from filling one’s entire life with Buddhist ideas and morals.”⁴⁰

In the following decades, the issue of the ‘indigenization’ of Buddhism was not raised again in such a focused national form as that of a ‘German Buddhism.’ Rather, since the 1970’s the development of a ‘Western Buddhism’ took on a prominent role.⁴¹ In addition, the intellectual understanding was added to, in many cases, by ‘composure’ and meditation practices.

Rationalist Interpretations Contextualized

The rationalist interpretations have to be seen in the light of their sociocultural setting. Early German Buddhists stressed certain advantages in Buddhism which were regarded as the reverse of the disadvantages of the religion they had abandoned. In the main, they had discarded Christianity. It should not be forgotten, however, that about a third of German Buddhists before World War II had been born as Jews.⁴² Buddhists emphasized knowledge, based on their own experience, which, according to them, stood in opposition to the Christian faith and dogma. The possibility of examining the Buddhist teachings was contrasted with Christian belief. Redemption by God’s

grace was set in opposition to the Buddhist's personal responsibility and autonomous moral conduct.

Buddhism as the 'religion of reason' was portrayed as the "humanistic contrast"⁴³ to the Christian religion, being valued as authoritarian and dogmatic. In this way, the rationalist interpretations and presentations of Buddhism served as a critique of the predominant religion in Western Europe. This protest against Christianity was simultaneously combined with the process of religious emancipation from it.

Furthermore, the specific interpretations typically mirrored ideals and values of the urbanized middle class stratum of society. In the main, this was the social background of early and present-day rationalist interpreters. These bourgeois values could be specified by characteristics such as personal responsibility and moral conduct, grounded on reason, and an emphasis on individuality. It was in these academic and learned circles that the values and ideals of European humanism and enlightenment were regarded highly, and appreciated in a romantic attitude. In this context, Buddhism served to retain these vanishing values; it bestowed upon those ideals a religious sanctification.

It seems fair to say that the rationalist interpretation of Buddhism was determined by the existing traditions of the European history of ideas, by the predominant values of the stratum of society from which the interpreters came and by the negative attitude towards the dominant religion.

Characteristics of Rationalist Interpretations

As outlined before, one of the main characteristics of rationalist interpretations had been its criticism of Christianity. German Buddhists of the first generation, such as the jurist Theodor Schultze (1824-1898) or the indologist Seidenstücker, did not shy away from publicly attacking Protestantism and Catholicism in Germany. In their opinion, Christianity was a principal cause of the decline of values and morals in Europe.⁴⁴

The selection involved particular reductions of what Buddhism seemed to be about. According to early German Buddhists or to

contemporary interpreters such as Paul Debes (born 1906) or Dr. Winfried Kruckenberg (born 1916), only textual sources provide the right access and means for comprehending the teachings. The practice of ritual or devotional acts and forms of worship, on the other hand, are valued as unnecessary. References to cosmological concepts are left aside. Religious objects such as relics, shrines or symbols take no importance and are devalued.⁴⁵ In this respect, the above-mentioned Lionel Stützer critically characterized his fellow Buddhists as: “Filled with true ‘Protestant’ mind, European Buddhists reject every ritual act as so-called formality, often with an emotionally emphasized refusal.”⁴⁶

In particular, the deliberate emphasis placed on the written word, on textual sources, combined with the devaluation of religious objects, mirrors a significant preference as to where the assumed “true” or “essential” Buddhism is located. Buddhism, according to these interpreters, apparently only exists in scriptures. It is only from there that Buddhist religion can be approached and understood. Only the scriptures, specified as particular parts of the Pāli canon (the *sutta pitaka*),⁴⁷ are able to provide the religion’s fundamentals.

The overriding textual orientation points to a hidden Protestant legacy of interpreting Buddhist religion. Such a Protestant assumption, however, not only applies to Buddhist interpreters but to a wide range of scholars of Buddhism and of the history of religions too, as Gregory Schopen has masterly pointed out.⁴⁸

Apart from the importance given to the text, one is able to outline further characteristics of a Protestant colouring. The importance of religious lay people is strengthened. In contrast, monks and religious specialists are no longer the main actors at gatherings, nor are they indispensable for spreading the word. Lay people have acquired a say in all affairs and have gained religious competence. They read and interpret Buddhist scriptures. They represent Buddhism in public. The rise in importance of the laity has had a democratising effect in officiating and mediating Buddhism. This was particularly true for the initial phases, as Buddhist monks and nuns had not settled in Germany.⁴⁹

Furthermore, a code of moral conduct for the Buddhist lay followers has explicitly been set up. There apparently existed straightforward rules on how a religious life was defined and which conduct was contradictory to it. This definition, however, formerly only applied to the monastic life, at least with regard to Southern Buddhism! Similar to the Protestant reformation of the 16th century, rationalist interpretations of Buddhism have raised the norms of a 'true' Buddhist life so that it is applicable to both, monkhood and laity alike. The Christianisation of the entire life of the Protestant follower is paralleled on the Buddhist side by the saturation of daily life with Buddhist norms. Just as within the Protestant sects of the reformation, features of life-style such as self-restraint, moderation of emotions, asceticism and rationalisation of daily activities are observable in the biographies of rationalist interpreters.⁵⁰ The attitudes and life-style of the above-mentioned Karl Seidenstücker and Paul Dahlke could be treated as most illustrative examples.⁵¹ As Max Weber wrote, the 'methodical' life, i.e. the rational form of asceticism, is moved out of the monastery into the world.⁵²

The new importance which the lay followers acquired enabled them to emphasize a religious subjectivity and individualism. South Asian lay forms of joint religiosity such as rituals and devotion were rejected. Instead, the religious orientation of a German lay Buddhist became mainly a matter of the mind, of reflection. The ritual symbolic communication was replaced by a verbal nonsensuous conversation.

Finally, Buddhists advocating a rationalist interpretation aim to purify the scriptures of later interpretations. They value all intervening traditions critically and strive to unfold the former "original teaching of the founder himself."⁵³ This is in line with the reformist struggle for presenting the assumed pure and unpolluted teaching. 'True' religion is separated from what is called "magical," "superstitious," "non-rational." The enmity and opposition towards magic finally results in a demythologisation and the "deprivation of mystique" (*Entzauberung*) of the world.⁵⁴ For the time being, this enumeration of Protestant features should suffice. Further characteristics of interest

are the rejection of mediators such as priests and (Catholic) saints, the assumption that a priesthood inevitably shackles and degrades the 'truth' and the emphasis on the individual person above community.⁵⁵

Buddhism in Protestant Shape

As a whole, rationalist interpretations of Buddhism in Germany cannot only be characterized as 'reformist' in the meaning specified by Robert Bellah,⁵⁶ but, furthermore, may be labelled as biased towards Protestantism. Rationalist interpretations of Buddhism have been a protest *against* Christianity and, at the same time, have taken over many salient features and attitudes of Protestantism itself. As such, the rationalist interpretation and presentation of Buddhist teachings may be labelled as "Protestant Buddhism." It is the particular *combination* of specific elements and characteristics which gives it its Protestant colouring.

In a by now classical article in 1970, anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere described and analysed the Buddhist revival in Ceylon around the turn of the century as "Protestant Buddhism."⁵⁷ The term should denote that many of the norms and organisational forms of Protestant Buddhism "are historical derivatives from Protestant Christianity. More importantly, from the contemporary point of view, it is a protest *against* Christianity and its associated Western political dominance prior to independence."⁵⁸ The analytical concept, elaborated by Obeyesekere in detail, "dominates the scholarly debate about the modernization of Theravāda Buddhism in South Asia" since its coinage.⁵⁹

In line with the arguments elaborated by Obeyesekere, it seems quite legitimate to speak of a "Protestant Buddhism" with regard to rationalist interpretations of Buddhism in Germany. Furthermore, it will possibly be valid with regard to similar Buddhist interpretations, such as those of Ananda Metteya (1872-1923) and Christmas Humphreys (1901-1983) in England, of Paul Carus (1852-1919) in North America, and of Natasha Jackson (1902-1990) and Charles F. Knight (1890-1975) in Australia. As German Buddhists, these Australian Buddhists "saw Buddhism as a triumph of rationalism and used

it as a foil in their attacks on Christianity. It was a strongly intellectualised approach, . . . [characteristic] for its vocal anti-clericalism.”⁶⁰

Conclusion

Discussion of the Notion “Protestant Buddhism”

The designation “Protestant Buddhism” has gained some prominence in recent discussions⁶¹ and descriptions.⁶² Nevertheless, both due to its bare naming and the generalized picture of a more or less homogenized ‘Protestantism,’ the concept remains ambiguous and questionable.⁶³ Despite such limitations, however, the concept’s heuristic value for analytical comparison and insight merits its importance. The advantage of the term is that it draws together into one concept striking features such as the overriding textual orientation, devaluation of ritual, rise of the importance of the laity, rationalization of life-style and the protest against the religion in power. A lasting disadvantage is that the notion “Protestant” is indissolubly linked to a particular historical development within Christianity. As such, it proves to be almost impossible to introduce the term as a theoretical concept. In addition, often the notion simply raises the wrong questions, being inappropriate to Buddhist concepts and practice.

On the basis of such reliable criticism, the task would be to find a more appropriate and less ambiguous term. The suggestion to speak simply of a “rationalist Buddhism” has got at least two disadvantages: on the one hand this expression lacks specificity and fails to carry the two meanings of protest *against* and of takeover. On the other hand, the antonym of “rational” is usually referred to as “irrational” or “unreasonable” which leads to the inference that all interpretations and developments which are not considered “rational Buddhism” may consequently be called “irrational Buddhism.” Another concept, that of *scripturalism*, rightly points to the importance of the written word and the looking back to the assumed pristine form of the tradition.⁶⁴ It does not, however, connote ideas of protest against the dominant religion. A feature, which seemed to be of paramount importance in the outlook and reshaping of the very tradition.

Culture Contact and the Creation of 'Buddhism in Protestant Shape'

In the introduction to this paper, the evaluation of an assumed development of a culture was specified as a decisive factor in a religion's degree of adaptability. A hierarchical assessment of a 'more versus less' advanced stage model was said to lead to only a few adaptations on the self-assessed superior side. A contact, in which the cultures were valued as equally ranked, however, would lead to many adaptations on the side of the transplanted, missionary religion. Such valuations are quite overtly based on evolutionary assumptions of late the 19th and early 20th century.⁶⁵ Although having been subsequently strongly criticized and refuted,⁶⁶ such assumptions are still implicitly relied upon by culture contacts.

German Buddhists around the turn of the century also shared such evolutionary concepts. On the one hand, these were stipulated upon Buddhist history itself, valuing Mahāyāna Buddhism as corrupt and degenerated, whereas Buddhism as preserved in the Pāli canon would represent the 'true,' 'unpolluted' and 'original' teaching.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Buddhists considered the assumed ongoing advancement and progress of German and European culture to be hindered by Christianity. In their opinion, a new, non-dogmatic religious orientation was needed. The religion should be able to cope with the sociocultural changes in Germany. For this purpose, Christianity was held to be 'outdated.' Similar to a kind of evolutionary concept of "survival," proposed by Edward Tylor, Christian dogmas and rituals were regarded as "proofs and examples of an older condition of culture."⁶⁸ Given such an assumption, only the survival "Christianity" needed to be replaced by a more appropriate religious worldview. Thus, Buddhism was respected highly as the fitting religion to Germany's cultural progress. Other cultural features would need either no changes or only minor modifications.

Early German Buddhists were of the opinion that German and more generally European culture had acquired a high level of evolutionary development. Hence, it was not the Ceylonese or Burmese culture that was needed to be transplanted, but only the Buddhist concepts.

The teachings were to be detached from their “Indian dress” and “exotic colouring”⁶⁹ in order to bring the so-called universal and timeless “core of the teaching” to the foreground.⁷⁰ Presented as a purely rationalist religion of philosophy and autonomous ethics, the missionary religion showed a high degree of adaptability.

The creation of a ‘Buddhism in Protestant shape’ was directed towards an alignment of, and a growing similarity with, the foreign religion to the assumed high ranking European culture. Buddhism in its scriptural form, but not the Asian culture and custom, was considered of equal rank to features of European civilization.⁷¹ Based on this selective assumption, textual sources became of paramount importance. As in Great Britain,⁷² during this early phase of adoption, Buddhism in Germany turned out to have become an essentially textual object. The interpretation and presentation of this created—or to use the popular term of Eric Hobsbawm “invented”⁷³—object probably tells us less about Buddhism itself than about salient basic cultural values and attitudes in Germany and in Europe in general.

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¹ See Catherine Choron-Baix, “De Forêts en banlieues. La Transplantation du Bouddhisme Lao en France,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 36, 73 (1991), pp. 17-33.

² See, among others, Le Huu Koa, *Les Viêtnamiens en France: la dialectique insertion/identité. Le processus d’immigration depuis la colonisation jusqu’à l’implantation de réfugiés* (Nizza: Département Lettres de Sciences Humaines, Diss., 1983); P. Rutledge, *The Role of Religion in Ethnic Self Identity: A Vietnamese Community* (New York: University Press of America, 1985); Thich Nhu Dien, *Das geistige Leben der buddhistischen Vietnam-Flüchtlinge im Ausland* (Hannover: Viêt Già Pagode, 1986) and *Bilder von den zehnjährigen Aktivitäten der vietnamesischen Buddhisten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Hannover: Viêt Già Pagode, 1988).

³ See Raymond Brady Williams, *A New Face of Hinduism: the Swaminarayan Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 201-204; Kim Knott, “Strategies for Survival among South Asian Religions in Britain: Parallel

Developments, Conflict and Cooperation," in: *Conflict and Cooperation between Contemporary Religious Groups*, ed. by Chuo Academic Research Institute (Tokyo International Symposium Proceedings, 1988), pp. 95-128 and Nathan Glazer, "American Jewry or American Judaism?," *Society* 28, 1, 189 (1990), pp. 14-20, esp. p. 16.

⁴ Although the expression "mission" and "missionary" is heavily laden with Christian associations, I use this notion for lack of a better term. Michael Pye suggested to replace "mission" for phenomenological purposes by the less biased term "transplantation," see Pye, "The Transplantation of Religions," *Numen*, 16, 4 (1969), pp. 234-239, esp. p. 235.

⁵ See, among many, John W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," in: Amado M. Padilla, ed., *Acculturation. Theory, Models, and some new Findings* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1980), pp. 9-25, and Martin Baumann, "The Transplantation of Buddhism to Germany—Processive Modes and Strategies of Adaptation," in: *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 6, 1 (1994), pp. 35-61.

⁶ See Jacques Gernet, *Chine et Christianisme. Action et réaction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); John D. Young, *Confucianism and Christianity. The First Encounter* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1983), and Hubert Seiwert, "Hochkultur und fremde Religion: Buddhismus und Katholizismus in China," in: Michael Pye, Renate Stegerhoff, eds., *Religion in fremder Kultur. Religion als Minderheit in Europa und Asien* (Saarbrücken-Scheidt: Dadder, 1987), pp. 55-75.

⁷ Richard Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism. A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London, New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 178.

⁸ See Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900. A Study of Religious Revival and Change* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 191-205.

⁹ See Pye, "Transplantation of Religions;" Steven Kaplan, "The Africanization of Missionary Christianity: History and Typology," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 16, 3 (1986), pp. 166-186, and Mark Mullins, "The Transplantation of Religion in Comparative Sociological Perspective," *Japanese Religion* 16, 2 (1990), pp. 43-62. A systematisation of such contextualizing factors is provided by Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach, Steven Vertovec, "Introduction: Themes in the Study of the South Asian Diaspora," in: C. Clarke, C. Peach, S. Vertovec, eds., *South Asian Overseas. Migration and Ethnicity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-29, esp. pp. 5-7.

¹⁰ For details, see Horst Gründer, *Welteroberung und Christentum. Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der Neuzeit* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1992).

¹¹ Another, present-day example of this adaptive strategy would be that of Hugo M. Enomiya-Lassalle with his "Zen for Christians" movement founded in Japan in the 1960's. See Hugo Makibi Enomiya-Lassalle, *Zen—Weg zur Erleuchtung* (Wien: Herder, 1959); Lassalle, *Zen—Meditation für Christen* (Bern: Scherz, 1968); Lassalle, *Mein Weg zum Zen* (München: Kösel, 1988), pp. 83-102; William Johnston,

The Mirror Mind (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). For a critical assessment of this 'Zen meditation in Christian perspective', see Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen im 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Kösel, 1990), pp. 124-168.

¹² Charles S. Prebish, *American Buddhism* (Belmont: Duxbury Press, 1979), pp. 16-20; Rick Fields, *How the Swans came to the Lake—A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1981), pp. 70-82; Donald Tuck, *Buddhist Churches of America: Jodo Shinshu* (New York, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), and Thomas A. Tweed, *The American encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912. Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 34-39 and pp. 179-181. For Australia, see Paul Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia 1848-1988* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1989), pp. 1-7, and Enid Adam, Philip J. Hughes, *The Buddhists in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996), pp. 6-7.

¹³ Eugène Burnouf, *L'introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844).

¹⁴ See Paul Carus, *Lieder eines Buddhisten* (Dresden 1882). In 1884, Carus emigrated to the United States. He became a publisher of Buddhist journals and books and an activist in organising the World's Parliament of Religions (1893). See William Peiris, *The Western Contribution to Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), pp. 251-255; Hellmuth Hecker, *Lebensbilder deutscher Buddhisten. Ein bio-bibliographisches Handbuch* Vol. 2: Die Nachfolger, (No. 5 of the series of the research project 'Buddhist Modernism', Konstanz: University of Konstanz, 1992), pp. 26-29 and Tweed, esp. pp. 65-67.

¹⁵ See Hecker, "Der erste deutsche Buddhist—Leben und Werk Karl Eugen Neumanns," *Bodhi Baum* 10, 5 (1985), pp. 195-216; Hecker, *Karl Eugen Neumann, Erstübersetzer der Reden des Buddha, Anreger zu abendländischer Spiritualität* (Hamburg, Wien: Octopus, 1986), and Hecker, *Lebensbilder deutscher Buddhisten. Ein bio-bibliographisches Handbuch* Vol. 1: Die Gründer (No. 1, Konstanz: University of Konstanz, 1990), pp. 100-114.

¹⁶ See the revised rules of 1906 in: *Die buddhistische Welt* 2, 1 (1906), pp. 3-5. About 50 members joined the society, its journal *Der Buddhist* had about 500 subscribers, see *Buddhistische Werte* 3, 1-2 (1911), p. 62.

¹⁷ For historical details of the development and adoption of Buddhism see Hellmuth Hecker, *Chronik des Buddhismus in Deutschland* (Hamburg: DBU, 1973, 2nd ed. 1978, 3rd ext. ed., Plochingen: DBU, 1985); Klaus-Josef Notz, *Der Buddhismus in Deutschland in seinen Selbstdarstellungen. Eine religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung zur religiösen Akkulturationsproblematik* (Frankfurt/Main, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1984), pp. 27-110, and Martin Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten. Geschichte und Gemeinschaften* (Marburg: Diagonal, 1993), pp. 43-111.

¹⁸ Georg Grimm's principal work was typically named *Die Lehre des Buddha, die Religion der Vernunft* (München: Piper, 1915, 20th edition Freiburg: Aurum 1988); English translation *The Doctrine of the Buddha*, by Bhikkhu Silacara (Leipzig 1926).

¹⁹ Karl Seidenstücker, "Was bringt uns die Zukunft?" *Buddhistische Warte* 1, 9 (1907), pp. 257-269, see esp. p. 265.

²⁰ For an analysis of the adoption during this phase see Frank Usarski, "Das Bekenntnis zum Buddhismus als Bildungsprivileg. Strukturmomente 'lebensweltlicher' Theravāda-Rezeption in Deutschland während des Zeitraums zwischen 1888 und 1924," in Peter Antes, Donat Pahnke, ed., *Die Religion von Oberschichten* (Marburg: Diagonal, 1989), pp. 75-86, and Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 55-59 and pp. 234-244.

²¹ For details see Notz, pp. 46-67; Hecker, *Chronik*, pp. 51-52, pp. 64-66; Volker Zotz, "Einige Anmerkungen zum Buddhismus-Bild deutschsprachiger Denker," *Bodhi Baum* 11, 2-3 (1986), pp. 72-82, esp. pp. 78-82, and Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 60-64.

²² Buddhist groups managed to survive under cover until 1941, then some prominent Buddhists were arrested and further activities forbidden. Jews, who had taken up Buddhism, were persecuted or forced to emigrate; see Helmut Klar, "Der Buddhismus zur Nazizeit," in: *Helmut Klar. Zeitzeuge zur Geschichte des Buddhismus in Deutschland*, ed. by Martin Baumann (Vol. 11, Konstanz: University of Konstanz, 1995), pp. 29-34, and Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 66-67.

²³ The Arya Maitreya Mandala (AMM) has direct lines with the German born Lama Anagārika Govinda (E. L. Hoffmann, 1898-1985), who founded this spiritual community in North India in 1933. See Govinda, *Grundlagen tibetischer Mystik* (Bern, München: Rascher, 1957); Govinda, "Ursprung und Ziele des Ordens Arya Maitreya Mandala," in: *Lama Anagarika Govinda und sein Orden Arya Maitreya Mandala* (series of the AMM, No. 1, Stuttgart: AMM, 1987), pp. 7-13, and Martin Baumann, *Der Orden Arya Maitreya Mandala. Religionswissenschaftliche Darstellung einer westlich-buddhistischen Gemeinschaft* (Marburg: Diagonal, 1994).

²⁴ The analysis is based on research in Germany but is probably also appropriate in other countries, see Detlef Kantowsky, "Buddhismus in Deutschland heute," *Spirita—Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 5, 1 (1991), pp. 22-32, esp. 26; Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 230-234, and Kantowsky, *Buddhismus* (Braunschweig: Aurum, 1993), p. 150.

²⁵ Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 218-224 and pp. 423-424. A similar rapid growth is ascertainable with regard to the British situation, see the analysis in Martin Baumann, "Creating a European Path to Nirvāna: Historical and Contemporary Developments of Buddhism in Europe," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 10, 1 (1995), pp. 55-70, esp. pp. 62-63.

²⁶ Various articles appeared in leading nation-wide newspapers and weekly magazines in early 1994. In addition, Bernardo Bertolucci's movie "Little Buddha" served

to attract both a huge audience and a widespread attention in the media. A similar trend was observable in Great Britain, France and Italy.

²⁷ Tweed, pp. 48-77.

²⁸ See Lance S. Cousins, "Theravāda Buddhism in England," in: *Buddhism into the Year 2.000*, ed. by the Dhammakāya Foundation (Bangkok: Dhammakāya Foundation, 1994), pp. 141-150, and Martin Baumann, "Analytische Rationalisten und romantische Sucher. Motive der Konversion zum Buddhismus in Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 79, 3 (1995), pp. 207-225.

²⁹ Tweed, p. 69.

³⁰ Tweed, p. 69.

³¹ It is difficult to estimate the percentage of romantics among early German Buddhists. Carrithers superbly analysed the romantic motives of Anton W. F. Gueth, the later Nyānatiloka, for becoming a Theravāda monk. See Michael Carrithers, *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 27-45. For the philosophical encounter of Indian and romantic ideas and concepts, see Wilhelm Halbfass, *Indien und Europa. Perspektiven ihrer geistigen Begegnung* (Basel, Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1981), esp. pp. 86-103.

³² Tweed, p. 51.

³³ Tweed, p. 77.

³⁴ Tweed, p. 61.

³⁵ Paul Dahlke, "Buddhistischer Gottesdienst," *Zeitschrift für Buddhismus und verwandte Gebiete* 1, 1-2 (1913), pp. 63-79, quote p. 74. See also Dahlke, *Der Buddhismus. Seine Stellung innerhalb des geistigen Lebens der Menschheit* (Leipzig: Emmanuel Reinicke Verlag, 1926), p. 23.

³⁶ See, among many, Karl Seidenstücker, "Die Weltmission des Buddhismus und das Abendland," *Buddhistische Warte* 3, 1-2 (1911), pp. 2-34, esp. pp. 8-13 and p. 32.

³⁷ Felix Knobeloch, "Wird es einmal einen 'deutschen Buddhismus' geben?" *Mitteilungsblatt der BG Hamburg* 6, 2 (1960), pp. 19-21. For a biographical portrait of Knobeloch, see Hecker, *Lebensbilder*, 1992, pp. 93-95.

³⁸ Knobeloch, quotes p. 21 and p. 19. Knobeloch praised Kurt Schmidt's translation of the *Majjhima Nikāya* as the "bible of German Buddhism," quote p. 20 (author's translation).

³⁹ Lionel Stützer, "Zu: Wird es einmal einen 'deutschen Buddhismus' geben?" *Mitteilungsblatt der BG Hamburg* 6, 3/4 (1960), pp. 43-45, quote p. 44 (author's translation). For a biographical portrait of Stützer, see Hecker, *Lebensbilder*, 1992, pp. 301-308.

⁴⁰ Lionel Stützer, "Der europäische Buddhismus und seine Bekenner," *Vaisakha* (1948), pp. 8-10; reprinted in *Buddhistische Monatsblätter* 31, 10 (1985), pp. 207-212, quote p. 212 (author's translation).

⁴¹ For example see Walter Karwath, *Buddhismus für das Abendland* (Wien: Octopus, 1971) and Gerhard Szczesny, *Ein Buddha für das Abendland* (Reinbek near Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976). In 1975, the European Buddhist Union was founded in Paris, see Baumann, "Creating a European Path," pp. 65-67.

⁴² See the portraits in Hecker, *Lebensbilder*, 1990 and 1992 and the analysis of these biographies in Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 241-243.

⁴³ Michael Mildenerberger, "'Religiöser Humanismus.' Zum europäischen Erbe im deutschen Buddhismus," in Günter Kehr, ed., *Zur Religionsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: Kösel, 1980), pp. 49-76, quote p. 51 (author's translation).

⁴⁴ For details about the often fierce attacks against Christian religion and concepts, see especially Theodor Schultze, *Vedanta und Buddhismus als Fermente für eine künftige Regeneration des religiösen Bewußtseins innerhalb des europäischen Kulturkreises* (Leipzig, 2nd ed., 1893/1898); Karl Seidenstücker, *Buddha und Christus. Eine buddhistische Apologetik* (Leipzig: Buddhistischer Missionsverlag, 1902/1907), and Seidenstücker, *Die Greuel der 'christlichen' Zivilisation. Briefe eines buddhistischen Lama aus Tibet* (Leipzig: Buddhistischer Missionsverlag, 1903 and 1907); Seidenstücker published these two harsh polemics, however, under the pseudonym Bruno Freydanck. Hecker notes that Seidenstücker's aggressive argument with Christianity was most probably due to his turning away from the Protestant vicarage that was his parents' home, see the portrait in Hecker, *Lebensbilder*, 1990, pp. 123-143, esp. p. 123.

⁴⁵ See the biographical portraits of Debes and Kruckenberg and a description of their particular understanding of Buddhism in Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 113-129.

⁴⁶ Stützer, "Der europäische Buddhismus," p. 211 (author's translation).

⁴⁷ See Paul Debes, *Meisterung der Existenz durch die Lehre des Buddha* (Bindlach: Buddhistisches Seminar, 2 vols., 1982); see vol. 1, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Gregory Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," *History of Religions* 31, 1 (1991), pp. 1-23, esp. pp. 19.

⁴⁹ An attempt, for example, to establish a *vihāra* (Buddhist monastery) in Germany in 1910 failed because of lack of support and interest. The undertaking was favoured by the 'German Pāli Society' ('Deutsche Pāli-Gesellschaft' 1909-1913), see §2, 4 of the rules, published in *Die Buddhistische Welt* 2, 4 (1910), p. 58. In addition, see Wolfgang Bohn, "Die Aufrichtung des Sangho im Abendland," *Die Buddhistische Welt* 3, 9 (1910), p. 92, and Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, p. 256.

⁵⁰ See the 128 portraits of German Buddhists in Hecker, *Lebensbilder*, 1990 and 1992. In addition, see the conversion stories of German Buddhists in Detlef Kantowsky, *Wegzeichen. Gespräche über buddhistische Praxis mit: Nyānaponika Mahāthera, Karl-Heinz Gottmann...* (No. 4, Konstanz: University of Konstanz,

1991, reprint Ulm: UKAS, 1994), and Klaus Bitter, *Konversionen zum tibetischen Buddhismus. Eine Analyse religiöser Biographien* (Göttingen: Oberdieck, 1988).

⁵¹ See Ulrich Steinke, *Karl Bernhard Seidenstücker, Leben—Schaffen—Wirken* (University of Tübingen, unpubl. M.A. thesis, 1989); Kurt Fischer, "Dr. Paul Dahlke. Eine Lebensskizze," *Buddhistisches Leben und Denken* 1, 1 (1930), pp. 12-18, and Martin Baumann, "Entsagung und Entselbstung. Eine Neuinterpretation des Lebens und Werkes des Buddhisten Paul Dahlke," in: *Living Faith—Lebendige religiöse Wirklichkeit. Festschrift für Hans-Jürgen Greschat*, ed. by Reiner Mahlke, Renate Pitzer-Reyl, Joachim Süss (Frankfurt/Main: P. Lang, 1997), pp. 263-282.

⁵² Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik I. Eine Aufsatzsammlung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920, 7th ed. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1984), p. 347. In addition, see, among many, Richard van Dülmen, "Reformation und Neuzeit," in: Richard van Dülmen, *Religion und Gesellschaft. Beiträge zu einer Religionsgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989), pp. 10-35, esp. pp. 26-27.

⁵³ Debes, Vol. 1, quote p. 4 (author's translation).

⁵⁴ Weber, p. 123 and p. 367. In addition, see K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England* (London, 1971), and Wolfgang Schieder, ed., *Volksreligiosität in der modernen Sozialgeschichte* (special issue of the journal *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, No. 11, 1986).

⁵⁵ Apart from the classical studies by Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (1906, 2nd ed. München, 1924; Engl.: *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World*, 1912, repr. Philadelphia: Fortress 1986) and Weber's *Die protestantische Ethik*, see, among others, Martin E. Marty, "Protestantism," in: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), Vol. 12, pp. 23-38.

⁵⁶ See Bellah: "... familiar devices of reformism [are]: a return to the early teachers and texts, a rejection of most of the intervening tradition, an interpretation of the pristine teaching, ...", Robert N. Bellah, "Epilogue: Religion and Progress in Modern Asia," in: R. Bellah, ed., *Religion and Progress in Modern Asia* (London, New York: Macmillan, Free Press, 1965, 2nd ed., 1968), pp. 168-225, quote p. 210.

⁵⁷ Gananath Obeyesekere, "Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon," *Modern Ceylon Studies* 1, 1 (1970), pp. 43-63; reprinted in Bradwell Smith, ed., *Two Wheels of Dhamma* (AAR Monograph No. 3, Chambersburg, 1972), pp. 58-78. For the argument see as well Obeyesekere, "Sinhala-Buddhist Identity in Ceylon," in: George de Vos, Lola Ross, eds., *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change* (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1975), pp. 229-258.

⁵⁸ Obeyesekere, "Religious Symbolism", p. 46-47. The term has been taken up by other scholars, see Malalgoda, p. 191 ff.; Richard Gombrich, Gananath Obeyesekere,

Buddhism Transformed. Religious Change in Sri Lanka (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 202-240; Gombrich, pp. 172-197; George D. Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka. Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 45-74.

⁵⁹ Stephen Prothero, "Henry Steel Olcott and 'Protestant Buddhism'," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, 2 (1995), pp. 281-302, quote p. 281.

⁶⁰ Paul Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia*, see p. 37-58, quote pp. 54-55.

⁶¹ Philip A. Mellor, "Protestant Buddhism? The Cultural Translation of Buddhism in England," *Religion* 21, 2 (1991), pp. 73-92; Dharmachari Kulananda, "Correspondence. 'Protestant Buddhism'," *Religion* 22, 2 (1992), pp. 101-103; Philip A. Mellor, "The FWBO and Tradition: A Reply to Dharmachari Kulananda," *Religion* 22, 2 (1992), pp. 104-107; Sangharakshita, *The FWBO and 'Protestant Buddhism.'* *An Affirmation and a Protest* (Glasgow: Windhorse, 1992).

⁶² Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996).

⁶³ For a critical assessment, see John C. Holt, "Protestant Buddhism?" *Religious Studies Review* 17, 4 (1991), p. 307-312 and Prothero, "Henry Steel Olcott," pp. 282-283 and pp. 296-299. The other term which is often used to point to the Buddhist revival in South Asia is "Buddhist Modernism." It was introduced by Alexandra David-Néel in 1911 and subsequently coined by Heinz Bechert. See Alexandra David-Néel, *Le Modernisme Bouddhiste et le Bouddhisme du Bouddha* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1911), and Heinz Bechert, *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin: A. Metzner, Vol. 1: Grundlagen: Ceylon, 1966), pp. 37-108.

⁶⁴ Apart from Ernest Gellner, who employs this concept in analysing Islamic society, see S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 401-433.

⁶⁵ Most influential had been Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 2 vols., 1871); William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London, 1889) and James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, New York, 2 vols., 1890).

⁶⁶ See Geo Widengren, "Evolutionism and the problem of the origin of religion," *Ethnos* (1945), pp. 57-96; Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); Kurt Rudolph, "Das Problem einer Entwicklung in der Religionsgeschichte," *Kairos* (1971), pp. 95-118 [Engl. translation in Kurt Rudolph, *Historical Fundamentals and the Study of Religions* (New York, London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 81-98 and pp. 111-114]; Hans-Joachim Koloß, "Der ethnologische Evolutionismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Darstellung und Kritik seiner theoretischen Grundlagen," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 111 (1986), pp. 15-46.

⁶⁷ See, among many, the understanding of Thomas W. Rhys Davids, Seidenstücker or Neumann and the presentation by scholars such as Hermann Oldenberg

and Friedrich Max Müller since the 1880's. See Christopher Clausen, "Victorian Buddhism and the Origins of Comparative Religion," *Religion* 5 (1975), pp. 1-15, esp. p. 7.

⁶⁸ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture. Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: J. Murray 1871, reprint New York: Harper & Row 1958), Vol. 1, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Karl Seidenstücker in a public discussion with Protestant pastors in Leipzig 1907, see "Mitteilungen: Eine christlich-buddhistische Debatte," *Buddhistische Werte* 1, 9 (1907), pp. 282-288, esp. p. 286. For the same argument, see also Hellmuth Hecker, *Das Buddhistische Seminar. Was ist es? Was will es?* (Hamburg: private publ., 1974), p. 32.

⁷⁰ Hellmuth Hecker, "Paul Debes—70 Jahre alt," *Buddhistische Monatsblätter* 22, 9 (1976), pp. 215-220, quote p. 218 (author's translation). Debes, and his 'pupil' Hecker, are just two among many contemporary Buddhists alluding to the constructed difference between 'culturally bounded' and 'essential' elements of Buddhism, see the analysis in Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, pp. 361-368.

⁷¹ This is probably an important reason, apart from missing economic connections to Japan, that Tweed's romantic or exotic-culture type is less frequently found among early German Buddhists than among American Buddhists.

⁷² See Philip C. Almond, "The Buddha in the West. From Myth to History," *Religion*, 16 (1986), pp. 305-322, and Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For the similar situation in the United States see Tweed, pp. 6-34.

⁷³ Eric J. Hobsbaw, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in: Eric J. Hobsbaw, Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: University Press Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1-14.

THE ICONOCLASM OF OBEISANCE: PROTESTANT IMAGES OF CHINESE RELIGION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

ERIC REINDERS

Summary

Western studies of Buddhism emphasize doctrine and meditation, but almost completely ignore devotional practice. Yet, obeisance to Buddha is the primary religious practice of the majority of Asian Buddhists. To account for this disparity, I explore the history of Protestant attitudes towards bowing. In English and German anti-Catholic polemics (and Catholic responses), Chinese and Catholic obeisance are conflated, the lowness of their prostrations emphasized, in contrast to the erectness of Protestant posture in worship. I survey two important encyclopedias of religion (Hastings' of 1914 and Eliade's of 1987), and the work of one of the founders of Sociology, Herbert Spencer, to show the persistence of these perspectives on obeisance.

Eighteenth and nineteenth-century Protestants worked to challenge the Jesuit representation of China as enlightened and originally monotheistic. Chinese religiosity was depicted as passive, lazy, infantile, and mindless, lacking any coherent doctrinal system. At times, the Protestant narrative of Christian history (from original pure community to institutional degeneration into idolatry) was superimposed on Chinese history. Obeisance itself was taken as sufficient proof of idolatry, the deceptive "holy mummeries" of Chinese/Catholic ritual.

These tensions came to a head when King George III of England sent Lord Macartney to have an audience with Emperor Qianlong of China, and Macartney refused to bow. A brief analysis of this well-documented mission reveals the confluence of religious, political, bodily, and gender dimensions. Recent treatments of that mission have missed the Protestant/Catholic dimensions of the issue.

Finally I suggest possible extensions of the theoretical concerns of this paper.

Introduction

If you look in a commercial bookstore for books on Asian religion, you might get the impression that "Buddhism," for example, was mostly a matter of philosophy, meditation, and perhaps aesthetics. In Jan Nattier's assessment, "Elite Buddhists [in America] have

redefined Buddhism as synonymous with the practice of meditation. Those Buddhist groups that do not focus on teaching of meditation, therefore, are viewed as not really Buddhist at all.”¹

In particular, Nattier notes a “lack of interest in (and even condescension toward) traditional devotional activities.”² Yet in Asia, the majority of laity who call themselves Buddhist almost never meditate and express only rudimentary “philosophical” notions; even monks and nuns do not necessarily meditate or philosophize. Rather than saying these Buddhists are not “real” or “good” Buddhists, I suggest the Western imagination of Asian religions is largely ignorant of an important element: devotion. Without exception, Asian Buddhists bow. There is almost nothing in Western scholarship about obeisance—and yet: the most common and pervasive Buddhist practice in Asia is obeisance to Buddha. For many Asian Buddhists, obeisance is the *sole* religious practice.

Given the prevalence of obeisance in Asia and the discourse on obeisance in China (the subject of my current research), I suggest that the absence of Western scholarly treatments of bowing stems not from an absence of the phenomena or discourse on bowing in Asia, but from the distinctive characteristics of the discursive practices (the positivities, to use Foucault’s term) of Western scholarship.³ How do we account for this apparent lacuna in modern discourse on Asia? What is the content of this particular “positivity?”

While researching the history of obeisance in China, I came to realize the wealth of debate on obeisance in Europe, particularly in anti-Catholic polemics. I bring together China, obeisance and Protestant/Catholic distinctions not arbitrarily: when polemicists spoke of China, they spoke of Protestant/Catholic differences; when they spoke of Protestant/Catholic differences, China usually came up for discussion. In either case, the specific link was usually a similarity in obeisance practice. Jesuit missionaries had created a certain “Enlightened” image of China, which later Protestants opposed. As Peyrefitte comments on the British Protestant Macartney and his peers, “They set about to destroy this myth irrevocably, denouncing the writings of the Catholic missionaries as pure fabrication. . . .

[T]hey came to believe that the supposedly incomparable model [of Chinese civilization] was in fact fossilized by ritual and steeped in vanity.”⁴

Protestant polemics against the Roman confession (and simultaneously against Chinese civilization) reveal distinctive attitudes towards ritual and obeisance, which can help to account for subsequent peculiarities in academic discourse on the subject of obeisance, at least to the extent that modern academic discourse on Asian religions is heir to Protestant dispositions. First, let us measure the persistence of anti-Catholic concepts of obeisance in two encyclopedic standards of the discipline of Religious Studies.

Obeisance in two Important Religious Studies Encyclopedias

The treatments of obeisance in the two large-scale encyclopedic enterprises in Religious Studies, James Hastings’ *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* of 1914, and Mircea Eliade’s *Encyclopedia of Religion* of 1987, illustrate the persistence of Protestant (or anti-Catholic) attitudes towards ritual in the project of *Religionwissenschaft*. In the earlier work, there is nothing listed under “bowing,” “prostration,” or “obeisance,” but A.E. Crawley’s article “Kneeling” takes great care to distinguish bowing, kneeling, and prostration, saying any confusion of the three would be “quite erroneous.”⁵ The distinction between kneeling and prostration was precisely sectarian in nature:

Among organized religions Christianity alone has given special significance to the posture of kneeling. During half its history the posture signified penitence; during the rest it signified prayer. At the change (marked by the Reformation) it was, by a curious association of ideas, identified with adoration or idolatry.⁶

Crawley characterizes prostrations as “Oriental,” as well as characteristic of Islam. He identifies the normal prayer posture of Jews and the early Christian church as standing, yet also mentions Paul’s pious wish that “at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow,”⁷ but the torso remains erect. He sums up his article with standard Protestant historiography:

the pioneers of the faith probably emphasized the penitent and suppliant posture . . . on all possible occasions; but, when the faith attained a secure position, the posture was relegated to its traditional use. The case would thus be a microcosm of the change of attitude shown by Christianity itself as a whole.⁸

In other words, kneeling as the quintessential Protestant posture is evident from the original Apostolic usage (initially penitent but signifying prayer as faith became “secure”), from Luther’s writings, and from this history of Christianity, which progresses from Catholic penitence to Protestant prayer. Postures involving greater lowering of the body are alternately Catholic, Oriental, Islamic, or idolatrous.

Eliade’s *Encyclopedia of Religion* contains no entries for “bowing,” “prostration,” “obeisance,” or “kneeling,” but does feature some discussion of these topics under the headings “Postures and gestures” and “Knees,” both by the Islamicist Frederick Denny. As one of only two sources cited in the bibliographical note, Denny cites the Crawley article from Hastings’ *Encyclopædia*: this fact alone certainly suggests the dearth of scholarship on obeisance practice in the interceding 71 years.⁹ Denny notes that “every religious tradition recognizes an intimate relationship between inward dispositions and external postures,” but laments the general neglect of the study of postures and gestures in Religious Studies and the social sciences.¹⁰

In fact, there is an older history of discourse on bowing in Europe, particularly in European and Anglophone Protestantism. Generalizing rather broadly, Frits Staal remarked: “ritual is more important in Judaism than in Christianity, and in Catholicism than in Protestantism; and the reverse holds, accordingly, for doctrine. Much of the emphasis on doctrine in the study of non-Western traditions is, in fact, connected with the rise of Protestantism.”¹¹ To a significant degree, American intellectual life (professional and amateur) is heir to Protestant and anti-Catholic dispositions (or positivities of discourse), although far from all American intellectual life is “Protestant” in any conventional sense of the word.¹² The question of how dominant the Protestant academic habitus is in North America and in the study of non-Protestant religions is taken up by Jacob Neusner, who notes in particular the “insistence in the Protestant tradition on the priority

of truth-claims in the study of religion.”¹³ Gregory Schopen argues that the bias in the study of Indian Buddhism towards written sources may stem from a logocentrism dominant in the Protestant traditions of most Western Indologists and Buddhologists. The bias often hinges on the logocentric assumption that the essence of real, correct religion is textual, and that the popular practices of believers represent some dilution or corruption.¹⁴ Susan Rosa comments: “the formal statements of conviction issued in the wake of the Reformation... had encouraged the development of the notion of religion as adherence to a set of propositions.”¹⁵

Arguments about Kneeling and Ritual in Anti-Catholic Discourse

Let me cite an example of the older discourse on obeisance. In 1683, a certain minister of the Church of England, John Evans, asked:

Whether Kneeling at the Sacrament be contrary to any express Command of Christ, ...whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that example which our Lord set us at the first Institution, ...whether Kneeling be not Unsutable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, ...[and] whether it be unlawful for us to receive Kneeling because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolators, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to Idolatrous ends and purposes.¹⁶

An example of the kind of argument which Evans opposed is a pamphlet by Henry Burton which argued: “Idolatry is utterly to be abhorred. But, Adoration or Bowing at the name Jesus is Idolatry. Therefore such adoration is altogether to be abhorred.”¹⁷ In another text, this kind of argument is put into the mouth of a “Fanatick Chaplain.”¹⁸ Burton asserts that it is no less idolatrous to worship a sound in one's ear than an image on a wall. He blames the introduction of the kneeling posture on the Medieval papacy (and/or on the Anti-Christ), an attribution derided by Evans: in either case there is the (asserted or denied) connection between kneeling and the doctrine of transubstantiation, which Evans refers to as the doctrine of the “Breaden God.” Indeed, the practice of iconoclasm by the Reformers was frequently linked to desecration of the host.¹⁹ A late seventeenth-century “Fanatick” voice says: “To worship the Bread is Idolatry; But to kneel at the Sacrament is to worship the Bread.”²⁰

In the mid- and late-seventeenth century, the concern with this bodily posture was thus basically three-fold. There were questions concerning: (a) its scriptural basis, involving a characteristically Protestant appeal to the priority of textual authority over institutional authority; (b) its possible insult to human dignity, involving therefore an implicit definition of the properly dignified self with its properly dignified posture (erect);²¹ and (c) its historical associations with “idolatry” and the Roman Catholic Church, involving therefore certain defining conflicts of religious, national and institutional identity.²² The critique of kneeling might also be placed within the broader framework of Protestant iconoclasm. The destruction of all manner of clerical objects (including candlesticks, lamps, and altars) by the iconoclasts “made traditional worship impossible: They altered how others would worship, how they would approach God. . . .for the iconoclasts, how one worshipped could not be separated from what one worshiped.”²³ Acts of obeisance were taken as sufficient signs of idolatry:

Now I want to prove that Christians must confess that they venerate their idols. The grounds [for the proof]: because they bow and scrape before them (for the sake of dead holy men) I can definitely conclude that they venerate images.²⁴

Hence, the destruction of objects of obeisance—the “tinsel of idolatry”²⁵—effectively lessened the role of obeisance itself, and served to implicate obeisance in questions of the relation of cleric and laity, and of God and humanity.

John Evans’ questions suggest a fundamental ambivalence towards ritual, and bowing in particular, in the Protestant world. One of the “founding fathers” of Protestantism, Martin Luther, for example, admitted the necessity, and also the falsity, of ritual: “The five senses and the whole body have their gestures and their rituals, under which the body must live as though under some sort of mask.”²⁶ So ritual masks truth. As Jonathan Z. Smith has pointed out, because ritual was not directly translatable into words, and because Truth was a matter of the Word, ritual action could make no direct claim to the efficacy of Truth. Indeed, one of the fundamental principles in Protestant

theology is the inefficacy of human action, even that of the mass.²⁷ Protestant iconoclasm thus extended to performed icons and sounds; ritual was “empty,” an echo of the true sound of God. Smith cites

the earliest instance of the English use of the word [ritual] reported by the Oxford English Dictionary: “[a book] containyng no manner of Doctrine. . . but onely certayn ritual Decrees to no purpose” (1570). Here, there is no question of beliefs, no problem of the endless subtlety of words, but rather nonsense. Ritual, lacking speech, resisted decipherment.²⁸

Talal Asad takes a similar approach, looking at the term as it evolved in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from 1771 to 1910.²⁹ He notes that the word “ritual” referred to a text, a book containing instructions on religious services, through to the seventh edition in 1852. That the ninth and tenth editions have no entries under “ritual” or “rite” might be considered the calm before the anthropological storm, for the 1910 eleventh edition treats ritual in a profoundly different way: as a cultural phenomenon crucial to all religions but not confined to religion; “a type of practice that is interpretable as standing for some further *verbally definable*, but tacit, event.”³⁰ In other words, ritual was considered culturally and historically important in so far as it signified (something else).

Later, according to Smith, in European academic circles, there were two kinds of basically Romantic attempts to “save the phenomenon.” On the one hand, ritual was accorded meaning insofar as it could be described as the enactment of a mythic narrative (available to us as a text, or at least as a narrative). Or, on the other hand, ritual was Romanticized as the residue of an original, spontaneous, mystical “seizure” (*Ergriffenheit*)—now lost to us. An example of this latter approach is Adolf Jensen’s *Myth and Cult Among Primitive Peoples*, which contrasts *Ergriffenheit*—the “engulfment of man by his environment. . . the bright flash of insight, the creative moment per se. . . an uncontrollable psychic event, without rationalism or deliberate intent”³¹—with the *Urdummheit* (“primal stupidity”) of subsequent “mere petrifications, . . . misinterpreted vestiges, drained of their former significance,”³² rationalized (if at all) by “pseudopurposes,”³³ in accordance with a “law of semantic depletion.”³⁴ Ritual is thus the

“impoverishment” of meaning.³⁵ The great single moment of reality is diluted by its repetition and formalism, so that eventually ritual “doesn’t mean anything.” The phenomenon is not “saved.”

There were also views which placed ritual prior to myth and even posited a wholly unreflexive ritual practice among primitive cultures, as Asad notes by citing the 1910 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

[I]n primitive religion it is ritual that generates and sustains myth, and not the other way around. ...[Primitive societies have priestly experts:] The function of such an expert, however, is chiefly to hand on mere rules for the performance of religious acts. ...the sacred books of the religions of middle grade teem with minute prescriptions as to ritual, but are almost destitute of doctrine. ...As regards the symbolic interpretation of ritual, this is usually held not to be primitive...³⁶

This emphasis on the mindless body of the “primitive” is combined with the discourse of obeisance to make bowing and even kneeling an index of the distinction between primitive and advanced, Protestant and Catholic; the Protestants followed the logic that says the elect are erect. To bow (lower than a kneeling posture) is primitive; ideas and interpretation come later (and closer to home).

Hermeneutics of the “Rationality” of Cultural Others

Even while the crude evolutionism which served as a theodicy of Western power has dropped away, the notion of indigenous actors performing acts of which they literally know not the meaning has certainly survived, in assorted degrees of subtlety. Whether one treats ritual as the routinized or degenerating enactment of a prior logos or mystical moment, as in Romanticism (and, for example, Eliade, Otto, or Jensen), or as an unfulfilled and mechanical precondition for the emergence of meaning (leading ultimately to doctrine), ritual acts in themselves have no meaning. To take a more recent example, Pierre Bourdieu has focused on the practical ability to act in social games as irrelevant to or even opposed to any rationalized, intellectually coherent explanation of one’s acts; he criticizes the notion that ritual exists to solve *logical* contradictions as based on the secret conviction of the “thinker” that only action which is understood is

fully performed.³⁷ Indeed, the “engaged” ignorance of the informant “has served as an important principle of anthropological interpretation from Tylor onward.”³⁸ Asad points to “the preoccupation with establishing as authoritatively as possible the meanings of representations where the explanations offered by indigenous discourses are considered ethnographically inadequate or incomplete.”³⁹

Such approaches, in Zito’s words, result in “bifurcating ritual into either meaning or performance.”⁴⁰ Or, as Hevia describes it: “In this configuration, reason and rationality occupy one pole of a continuum, the other of which is ritual and ceremony.”⁴¹ The ramifications of this kind of opposition in the positivities of contemporary discourse are surely very complex. As I will argue below, the earlier, Jesuit accounts of China put Chinese civilization at the “rational” end of that continuum; later, Protestants put China (and Catholicism) at the “ritual” end.

In nineteenth-century Anglophone scholarship on religion and on China, the Chinese were regarded as particularly prone to “mere ritual,” or “mummery,”⁴² as, for example, in Samuel Johnson’s characterization of 1878: “The Chinese creative faculty remains within the plane of certain organic habits, failing to rise from the formalism of rules to the freedom of the idea.”⁴³ The elaboration of ritual by the Chinese was an example of how “grotesque transformations may befall the higher elements of character when absorbed by an intense interest in concrete details.”⁴⁴ John Francis Davis reports such “grotesque transformations” among Chinese Buddhist clerics: “swinish laziness and stupidity” and “an expression approaching to idiotcy,”⁴⁵ so that “to the repetition of the bare sounds, without regard to the meaning, they attach the highest importance.”⁴⁶ Even the sometimes sympathetic S. Wells Williams in 1907 commented on “the want of a well understood and acknowledged standard of doctrine” in Chinese religious life.⁴⁷

At the same time that Protestant polemicists spoke of Catholic-Protestant differences and of China, they agreed on the spiritual mindlessness of the Chinese, claiming the Chinese could not offer any account of their ritual action. They remarked on what they saw

as the stupidity of Buddhist monks in particular. They took the inability to give them an account which conformed to the “positivities” of their episteme, as a sure sign of the inferiority of the other religion (as they perceived “religion”). In contrast, Jesuits in particular made some exception for Confucianism as valid wisdom, or as a religion of sorts, of course fatally flawed through its absence of Christ but still revelatory of God’s grand design.

The image of the Chinese as indifferent to matters of doctrine, and the explicit association with Roman Catholicism,⁴⁸ pervade Protestant representations of China. In fact, even the Jesuits, who did the most to construct China as a wise civilization, conceded the similarity: the Jesuit Johann Greuber describes obeisance to Buddhist Lamas:

When strangers come to him, they fall upon their faces, they creep to him upon their knees, and kiss his feet, as the Papists do the toes of their Pope, with a wonderful respect.

From hence we may discover the Devils subtilty, in appropriating this ceremony and testimony of respect due to none on Earth, but to the Pope of Rome, to the barbarous Superstitions of this Idolatrous Nation. He hath had the malice to transfer and usurp all the other mysteries of our Faith to his own Worship.⁴⁹

Here is a Jesuit noting the demonic inspiration of Chinese/Lamaist obeisance and at the same time its resemblance to Catholic obeisance, but drawing an entirely different conclusion—not that Catholics are idolators but that the obeisance of idolators derives from Catholic obeisance, through the Devil’s malice. Protestants pictured a pure Mosaic faith and/or a pure early Christianity later—even as soon as St. Paul—corrupted by exposure to idolators; so the resemblance implied for Protestants that idolatrous obeisance entering a pure Christianity from the outside. Here, instead, the Jesuit shows the pure Church complete with obeisance from the start, and shows the Church as the origin of even that false obeisance now seen among idolators. The diffusion of obeisance is outwards from purity to pollution, from reality to delusions.

One might contrast this Jesuit’s explanation with the Protestant Divine’s 1697 response to the radically iconoclastic Fanatick Chaplain, who pointed out the resemblance of Roman and Church of England

obeisance. The Protestant Divine admits the similarity, but qualifies it: "We kneel, and the Papists kneel: but we declare when we kneel, we intend no adoration to the Elements: but the Papists cannot deny that they do give proper adoration to that which is before them; which we say is bread."⁵⁰ The crucial difference between idolatry and orthodoxy is a declaration, a doctrinal assertion, that this act worships God and not a material object. The implication is that the Divine considers the extreme iconoclastic/anti-idolatry position to be excessively fixated on mere bodily form; whereas the Divine's position is that a doctrinal assertion that this is *not* idolatry is sufficient.

The Fanatick Chaplain refuses to distinguish between different acts of obeisance—"It is all one to me"⁵¹—and denies any significance to mental states: a bow is a bow is a bow. The Divine, in response, asks "do you think that bowing down is meant of the Mind or of the Body?"⁵² (The Chaplain does not comprehend, and has no answer.) Given the mind/body opposition here, to be mindless is to be "body-full," and the Divine intends that since obeisance "is meant of the Mind," the body is untouched by idolatry. The Protestant Divine can bow as long as the bow is accompanied by a mental (spoken) element defining the intention. Recall the Protestant image of the Chinese as mindless and "of the flesh;" China is "Romish" because of prostration to idols; but the extreme iconoclastic position is also mindless, seeing nothing beyond the body.

Chinese/Catholic Passive Dullness and Sinological Narrative

A Protestant narrative of history was transposed onto the religious history of China: for example, Burder describes Confucianism as an ancient Chinese "primitive creed" (the simple worship of a moral supreme being) which degenerated into "a multitude of superstitions," so that "the people forgot the simple worship of the Shang-tee,⁵³ and embraced every new invention of idolatry with the utmost avidity."⁵⁴ Among the "new inventions" was, for example, the ledger of merit, prompting Davis to remark: "This method of keeping a score with heaven is as foolish and dangerous a system of morality as that of penances and indulgences in the Roman church."⁵⁵

Davis cites a certain missionary called Milne, who asserts that the similarity of Chinese religiosity and that of the Roman Catholics lies especially in the preference for prayers spoken in languages unintelligible to the speaker—in “meaningless” prayer. Hence, in violation of “Scripture, reason, and common sense,” Catholics and Chinese, as well as the “bloody Druids of ancient Europe, the naked gymnosophists of India” and myriad other non-Protestants “all entertain the notion that the mysteries of religion will be the more revered the less they are understood.”⁵⁶ Rather than acting upon rational motives or even on faith, the Chinese were described as mechanistically following outward custom: “the merest shell of conformity is all that is demanded.”⁵⁷ So too, “seventeenth-century Protestant controversialists. . . were quick to accuse their opponents of a mindless adherence to ancient authority.”⁵⁸

The mindlessness of the Chinese in early Anglophone Sinology took on several metaphoric aspects, such as stupor, sleep, and infancy. The attribution to the ordinary Chinese of stupor or dim stupidity is remarkably pervasive in nineteenth-century accounts of China, as if to emphasize their supposedly mindless and timeless routine: “A great proportion of the northern Chinese seem to be in a sleepy or dreaming state, from which it is difficult to awaken them. . . . [they gaze at foreigners] with a sort of stupid dreaming eye; . . . drawn there by some strange mesmeric influence over which they have no control.”⁵⁹

If they were not stupid, stuporous or dreaming, then perhaps they were children: a late eighteenth-century Protestant observer remarked that “the Chinese were *unable* to become adults” since, as Peyrefitte much later commented, the patriarchal cults of emperor and father “has mired them in a psychic infantilism that meshes perfectly with their xenophobia and their rejection of innovation.”⁶⁰ Peyrefitte clearly thinks this condition is as true now as ever, freely jumping between late seventeenth-century discourse and his personal experiences in China as a French diplomat in the 1980’s, noting similarities particularly with regard to bureaucratic sluggishness.

The projection of Catholic-Protestant polemical distinctions onto China has its roots in the way that Jesuits presented the Chinese to the European and Enlightenment gaze: as civilized, rational, and in some cases monotheistic. In part, they created this image in order to use the “Chinese philosopher” as the impartial judge of disputes over credibility and authority, disputes in which rationality was privileged. For example, in a 1659 text by the Jesuit professor Vitus Erbermann⁶¹ (1597-1675), called “Dialogues among a Lutheran theologian, a Jesuit, and a Chinese Philosopher,” the Chinese philosopher “represents the embodiment of right reason,”⁶² who thus “angrily refutes the accusation of idolatry leveled at him by the Lutheran theologian, and professes the following creed: the Chinese, he proclaims, in accordance with the light of nature, acknowledge one God, creator of all things, the best, the wisest, and the most powerful.”⁶³ The Chinese, Erbermann claims, also believe in the immortality of the soul, and union with God after death.

Protestant accounts of China, however, meticulously countered each of these claims. They reported at length on the ignorance, lack of rationality, mechanical ritualism, and clerical parasitism of Chinese religious life. If the average Chinese consciously “believes” anything at all, it is in his idols who are petty and absurd, and not in any creator nor afterlife. Hence the repeated exclamations of the resemblance of Chinese religious practice to the “the holy mummeries of the Romish Church”⁶⁴ served to destroy the credentials of the Chinese gentleman as rational and impartial judge. (If the judge had always seemed to side with Catholics, perhaps it was because the judge was created by Jesuits.) One of the most effective ways of showing the inferiority and error of Chinese (and therefore Catholic) religiosity was to damn it as idolatry, especially by focusing on the practice of obeisance.

King George’s “Stiff Upper Lip”

It would be a mistake to attribute any neglect of (or disdain for) ritual to Protestant doctrine alone: the issue has much broader and more elusive cultural implications: in terms of class, gender, and

ethnicity. For example, one theme of the essays in *A Cultural History of Gesture* is “the distaste of northern Europeans for the gesticulating southerners, particularly the French and Italians.”⁶⁵ Or, having argued at length that obeisance and prostration in particular are more widespread and emphatic in primitive, militaristic and pre-industrial cultures—“wherever despotism is unmitigated and subordination slavish”⁶⁶—the British Protestant Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) notes “it is observable that between the more militant nations of Europe and the less militant, kindred differences [in obeisance practice] are traceable. On the Continent obeisances are fuller, and more studiously attended to, than they are here.”⁶⁷ British Protestants, with their “stiff upper lips,” have often been considered notoriously and even proudly inexpressive compared to those countries with stronger Catholic traditions. Adam Smith remarked that the British can speak of life’s most important things “without altering a muscle.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, there are class dimensions to gestural expression: in broad terms, working class speakers tend to gesticulate more. Macartney himself makes an explicit association of China and the working class: the “mass of the people in China are gross idolators. . . . The vulgar, as everywhere, are in general excessively superstitious.”⁶⁹ Undoubtedly a gendered analysis would point out further implications: Bourdieu, for example, has suggested that the ritual opposition between straight and bent is, at its most fundamental level, sexually determined.⁷⁰ As mentioned below, Hevia sees obeisance in terms of cultural “feminization.”

A full genealogy of these themes inevitably brings us to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century diplomatic missions from the throne of England to the emperor of China, such as the Macartney embassy of 1793 and the Amherst mission of 1816, in which the performance of the kowtow (*koutou*) became a matter of significant contention in China and in Europe.⁷¹ Even Napoleon Bonaparte offered an opinion on the issue.⁷² Until we take bowing (and the production of the display of bowing) seriously, there is a kind of surreal oddity in the intensity of the arguments about placement of chairs, audience sites, and the kowtow. It seems peculiar, even comical, that with so much at stake,

great nations would bicker about knees. Yet among the provisions of the Boxer Protocol of 1901 was a “nearly complete rewriting of imperial audience,” as the Western powers succeeded in “formally eliminating various elements, including the *koutou*, from audiences with the emperor and inserting European practices in their stead.”⁷³ As Hevia notes, “Each of these incidents speaks to the centrality of bodily practices as objects of struggle between the imperial government and Western diplomats.”⁷⁴

The most strictly ritualized English and Chinese obeisance practice met, face to face, for the first time in 1792, when King George of England sent a high-ranking ambassador called George Macartney to present a letter and gifts to the Emperor of China, Qianlong. Perhaps because the Chinese worked to make this visit fit the category of paying tribute from a vassal state, the mission was not particularly successful for the British. In its later representations, the episode came to be known as a conflict over obeisance: the Chinese insisting on a full prostration of “striking the head” (*ketou* or *koutou*) nine times on the ground before Qianlong, and Macartney refusing to bend down any lower than he would to King George.

Fortunately we have two good, recent studies of this mission in English: Alain Peyrefitte’s *The Collision of Two Civilizations: The British Expedition to China in 1792-1794*⁷⁵ and James Hevia’s *Cherishing Men From Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*.⁷⁶ Peyrefitte presents a more story-like account, compared to Hevia’s explicit theoretical concerns. Hevia’s book on the Macartney mission presents far more than just the kneeling/*koutou* issue. However, progress towards the audience and the moment of physical encounter itself are the theoretical and historiographical crux of this study, a kind of Durkheimian *fait typique* towards which Hevia builds, with discussions of ritual theory, Qing sovereignty, the tribute system, and Macartney’s cultural milieu.

Hevia’s theorization of the mission includes a critique of the Victorian notion which opposes ritual to rationality:

From the point of view of a reason-centered secularism that is heavily influenced by the natural sciences, the claims made about rites cannot be possible (consider,

for example, transubstantiation in the Roman Catholic mass); therefore, they must be about something outside themselves.⁷⁷

This “something outside,” he goes on to say, has usually been either symbolic or functional, in either case portraying the ritual event as a mask or illusion. “To the reasoning eye, ceremony was contentless form designed to mask the mechanisms of power and awe the unenlightened mind.”⁷⁸

In Hevia’s own “reasoning eye,” the hierarchical order produced by the discourse and practice of guest ritual may thus

be seen as contingent positioning wherein individual agents are simultaneously constituted and constitutive of other positions by the up/down-in/out movement of imperial institutions, memorials, people, and things, which, in turn, produces an order of difference.⁷⁹

So why did the English ambassador refuse to perform the *koutou*? Hevia writes that such an act would have violated the “dignity,” first, of the English monarch, and second, of an English gentleman. Hevia does provide a few suggestions why this act was considered so undignified in the first place. For Macartney and his peers, it “seems to have conjured up all sorts of distasteful images in the imagination of the bourgeois gentlemen, not the least being the conflation of ground/low with dirt and the ‘vulgar’ orders.”⁸⁰ Macartney observes that the “mass of the people in China are gross idolators. . . . The vulgar, as everywhere, are in general excessively superstitious.”⁸¹

The kowtow was also taken as “the sign par excellence of Asia’s slavish and feminized masses.”⁸² Near the end of his book, Hevia takes the discussion of these “conjured up” associations further:

Kneeling had long been associated in Great Britain with subjugation, but such associations took on added urgency in the nineteenth century as a result of the transformations of physical space in the emerging bourgeois world. The opposition between kneeling and standing upright resonates with others such as high/clean and low/dirty, distinctions which figured not social class and the geography of the nineteenth-century city, but. . . the feminization of servitude in the figure of the kneeling chambermaid. The Victorian gentleman and maker of empire was just the opposite—stalwartly upright, only touching the ground with more than one knee when wounded or dead at the hands of savage barbarians.⁸³

These remarks are wonderfully pregnant, but unfortunately not developed. In them we see the meaning of obeisance as determined in part by gendered “order of difference,” which conflates domestic servitude, the feminine and the bent physical posture. Macartney did not want to act like a chambermaid. Hevia also refers to an association with “subjugation,” whether sexual, class-based, occupational, diplomatic and political. But Hevia seems to have almost ignored the Protestant Reformation, wherein prostration was also “Catholic.” As Macartney wrote:

The paraphernalia of religion displayed here—the altars, images, tabernacles, censers, lamps, candles, and candlesticks—with the sanctimonious deportment of the priests and the solemnity used in the celebration of their mysteries, have no small resemblance to the holy mummeries of the Romish Church as practiced in those countries where it is rich and powerful.⁸⁴

Hevia mentions that Macartney “visited the Potala temple, where he learned that the ceremonies of its monks were like those of the ‘Romish Church’ ”⁸⁵ but does virtually nothing with this clue. The “Romish” appearance of Chinese religious practices is noted with regularity, even predictability, throughout Protestant accounts of China. The Protestant Englishman’s “revulsion”⁸⁶ of the kowtow must take on richer historical nuances when we read, for example, the words of the iconoclast Karlstadt: “Now I want to prove that Christians must confess that they venerate their idols. The grounds [for the proof]: because they bow and scrape before them (for the sake of dead holy men) I can definitely conclude that they venerate images. For if I venerate a marshal in the name of the prince he serves, I venerate both him and his prince.”⁸⁷ And, one might juxtapose the English bourgeois “feminization” of China, which Hevia describes in terms of obeisance posture, with Karlstadt’s view of “the worshippers of images as whores and adulterous women” and of idolatrous churches “as whorehouses.”⁸⁸ The Fanatick Chaplain and the Protestant Divine agree that Rome is idolatrous, but the Fanatick Chaplain calls the Church of England “the younger sister to the Whore of Babylon.”⁸⁹ The same Fanatick voice says: “What the cup of fornication means,

that is Idolatry, and to bow at the name of Jesus, and to bow to the Altar, that is Idolatry.”⁹⁰

The Discursive Chain of Obeisance

Inherent to the Protestant Reformation was a broad, diffuse effort to straighten the body, keep it vertical, to avoid postures involving the torso becoming markedly horizontal. The erect posture was in contrast to Catholics, idolators, heathens and pagans, and in contrast to the Chinese. “Chinese” and “Catholic” became fused in the definition (by exclusion) of Protestant Churches. Thus Macartney’s refusal to bow was not only a matter of politics but also of religion. The conversation between a Protestant Divine, a Romish priest and a Fanatick Chaplain inevitably turned toward China, and towards their bowing practices.⁹¹

Chinese and Catholic religiosity were linked in Protestant polemics in part because of the apparent prominence given to obeisance, but these two terms, Chinese and Catholic, were not the only links in the chain of idolatry: Kibbey notes “The urge to apply the ‘Popish’ floating sign to people other than Catholics, even to Puritans.”⁹² A revealing example of the multiple associations made possible by the general accusation of excessive obeisance is to be found in the chapter “Obeisances” by the British Protestant and founding figure of Sociology, Herbert Spencer. A thoroughgoing social Darwinist, Spencer considered the behavior of social animals and humans parallel or on a continuum. Hence his chapter on obeisance begins with the example of a small dog cringing and offering its belly to a large dog. The primal origin of obeisance is the contrast, after physical combat, of the victor standing erect over the fallen and disordered body of the defeated.

From the beaten dog which, crawling on its belly licks its master’s hand, we trace up the general truth that ceremonial forms are naturally initiated by the relation of conqueror and conquered, and the consequent truth that they develop along with the militant type of society.⁹³

Spencer saw continua running from the results of actual physical combat to entirely symbolic enactment, and from the most extreme

enactments (prostration, self-mortification, removal of clothing) to faint “remnants”⁹⁴ of these gestures, as in the nod of the head or the touch of the cap. This “abridgement”⁹⁵ corresponded precisely to the evolution from the past to the present, from primitive to modern, from Catholic to Protestant, and from the “other” to “us” (us British). In Spencer’s terms, the gradation of obeisance also corresponded to the difference between “militant” societies based on physical coercion, fear, deception and distrust, and “industrial” societies based on cooperation, honesty and trust.⁹⁶ The origin of obeisance is the single pugilistic “primal moment,” real or threatened. Prostration onto the face, for example, occurs only in the most militaristic, despotic and slavish societies.⁹⁷ Attention to obeisance survives in modern Europe where “militancy” survives: among the upper classes, the army and navy, and in general, on the Continent rather than in Protestant England.⁹⁸

Neither the prostrations and repeated knockings of the head upon the ground by the Chinese worshipper, nor the kindred attitude of the Mahommedan at prayers, occurs where freer forms of social institutions, proper to the industrial type, have much qualified the militant type. Even going on the knees as a form of religious homage, has, among ourselves, fallen greatly into disuse; and the most unmilitant of our sects, the Quakers, make no religious obeisances whatever.⁹⁹

Obeisance practice thus functioned as an empirical measure of the inherently non-coercive and honest nature of “industrial” social structures, and as an index of the dignity and integrity of British social institutions. On one end of the yardstick of obeisance was full prostration, self-mortification, ritual nudity, despotism, militarism, deception, slavishness, China, Siam, Japan, primitives, Catholics, idolators, and dogs. On the other end was Herbert Spencer’s world: faint echoes of obeisance (growing fainter every day), freedom, industry, free-market Capitalism, honesty, dignity, Britain, Protestantism (and perhaps even God). In the nineteenth century, British colonialism was at its peak, yet Spencer’s archetypal scenario, the winner of a fight towering above the beaten victim, was projected in its purer forms on the very cultures Britain was dominating or threatening. Whatever we might say about these associations as a theodicy of nineteenth-

century European colonial privilege, Spencer uses obeisance as an index of these national, religious, sectarian, historiographic, racial and political polarities.

Conclusions

In terms of the broader possibilities for development of the themes and approaches I have argued for here, a theory of the political economy of obeisance and an emphasis in historical research on obeisance practice and discourse might be extended outside of Sinology and the study of Buddhism. In other fields of study or theoretically similar phenomena, implications of anti-Catholic obeisance posture can be detected, for example, in the study of representations of Islam in the popular media. In American newspapers, one of the main visual images used to illustrate stories on Islam-related topics is the mass obeisance to Mecca. Images of the Japanese are also strongly associated with bowing. Is it only that obeisance is more photogenic than people just standing around? Or might the popular images of certain peoples as bowed-down be related to a Protestant bias? It is not an issue of whether Moslems or Japanese actually bow or not—they do—but rather an issue of the cultural politics of representation.

In the American anti-Communist discourse of the McCarthy period, children were told not only to salute the flag, but also: if the Reds ever do invade, no matter what you do, don't bow down to them. In the meantime, "stand up and salute the flag." A salute to the flag is a kind of obeisance, although it is exaggeratedly erect. It achieves its vertical distinction higher in the atmosphere—up at the top of a flagpole—rather than primarily in the lowering of the prostrated body. There were those who would not salute the flag, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses. Witnesses on missionary duty have a set of scriptural citations and comments all ready for that question; it is one of their distinguishing marks. In political questions, the Witnesses claim to be not anti-American but neutral, and that their church alone is fully neutral on issues of "worldly life."

Another case of the bowing/not-bowing body as focus and locus of conflict is the "most famous act" of the Japanese Protestant Uchimura

Kanzo, who in 1891 bowed, but not deeply enough, to the imperial signature on the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education. This partial abstention “made his name a household word.”¹⁰⁰

Finally, to bring us back to the research which prompted this essay, there is also a long history of debate over obeisance in Asia, independent of Europe and the Protestant Reformation. In 662 C.E., the Chinese emperor Gaozong convened an imperial debate on this question: should Buddhist monks and nuns be commanded to bow to their parents and to the emperor? Confucian imperial ritual required that all subjects bow to their ruler, but Chinese Buddhist monks claimed the right to abstain from bowing to *any* laity. This claim to exemption from the orthodox mode of social interaction provoked persistent conflict between Buddhists and imperial ritualists throughout the Medieval period. It became clear, early in my research, that the monks’ claim to the right of abstention from the bow was not in any way a rejection of the bow as a strategy of embodying social distinctions, as a system of expressing and creating hierarchy, or as an essential element in the broader monastic technology of the self.¹⁰¹

In China and in Europe, in Medieval times and today, bowing has been made an object of analysis in ways which force us to locate this practice not on the periphery of what Buddhologists, Sinologists and Historians of Religions have traditionally studied, but fully in its midst.

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ERIC REINDERS

¹ *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* 5/1 (Fall 1995), 48. See also Paul David Numrich, *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization of Two Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Temples* (Knoxville, 1996), 119-125. My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for this reference and several good suggestions.

² Nattier, *ibid.*, 45. See also Charles Hallisey, “Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravada Buddhism,” *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism*

Under Colonialism, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago, 1995), 44-46, and the editor's introduction to the same volume, especially 6-8.

³ In Foucault's usage, discursive practice is that set of rules, not necessarily coherently rationalized, which allows a statement to be relevant to other statements in particular groupings. "To analyze positivities is to show in accordance with which rules a discursive practice may form groups of objects, enunciations, concepts, or theoretical choices." *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York, 1972), 181. The positivity evident in a set of texts thus "defines a field in which formal identities, thematic continuities, translations of concepts, and polemical interchanges may be deployed." *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴ Alain Peyrefitte, *The Collision of Two Civilizations: The British Expedition to China in 1792-1794*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London, 1993), xviii.

⁵ A.E. Crawley, "Kneeling," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh, 1914), 745.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 746.

⁷ *Philippians* 2: 10.

⁸ Crawley, "Kneeling," 746. On Martin Luther's assertion of the propriety of kneeling in worship, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (New York, 1964), 84-85. Luther also saw kneeling as less necessary as Christian faith becomes more earnest. Liturgical forms were thus a "concession." *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹ One notable exception is Richard C. Trexler, *The Christian at Prayer: An Illustrated Prayer Manual Attributed to Peter the Chanter (d. 1197)*. (Binghamton, 1987).

¹⁰ Denny, "Postures and Gestures," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 11, 461.

¹¹ Frits Staal, *Rules Without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences* (New York, 1989), 415.

¹² Notwithstanding the jest of Umberto Eco that Macintosh is Catholic and IBM Protestant.

¹³ "The Academic Study of Judaism, the Religion: Progress in Thirty-Five Years?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62/4 (1995), 1053. From another angle, James Ketelaar's chapter on the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago makes clear the Protestant grounds for the inclusive yet hegemonic treatment of other religions. "The success of the Parliament's staging of the Other is impressive for both its tenacity of purpose and its ability to refigure even the clearest opposition into a harmonious utterance." *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution*. (Princeton, 1990), 150.

¹⁴ "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism" in *History of Religions* 31/1 (August 1991), 1-23. There is a natural tendency for representations of remote cultures to be dominated by spoken, written, or read

statements, since language (for example, the English language) serves so well to communicate information, especially over long distances. If you play a game of charades, you find that it takes much longer to communicate the name of the film by using only your body, whereas speaking the words would convey the answer immediately. For these and many other reasons, scholars tend to rely heavily on textual analysis; we are always liable to forget the physical work expended in textual production and preservation.

¹⁵ Susan Rosa, "Seventeenth-Century Catholic Polemic and the Rise of Cultural rationalism: An Example from the Empire," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57/1 (Jan. 96), 88.

¹⁶ John Evans, *The Case of Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, Stated and Resolved* (London, 1683).

¹⁷ *Jesu-Worship Confuted, or, Certain Arguments Against Bowing at the Name Jesus, Proving it to be Idolatrous and Superstitious, and so utterly unlawfull, with Objections to the contrary fully Answered* (London, 1660), 1.

¹⁸ As in: *Several Conferences Between a Romish Priest, A Fanatick Chaplain, and a Divine of the Church of England, Concerning the Idolatry of the Church of Rome: Being a Full Answer to the Late Dialogues of T. G[odwin]*. (London, 1679).

¹⁹ The host was fed to goats and dogs, cast on the ground, eaten, and hung around a horse's neck. See Carlos M.N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), 113, 121, 128, 138, 146. For a rich treatment of the ritual and politics of the host in the late Medieval period, see Charles Zika, "Hosts, Processions and Pilgrimages: Controlling the Sacred in Fifteenth-Century Germany," *Past & Present* 118 (Feb. 1988), 25-64. In particular, he treats the host as a clerical instrument of control: "It served as a demonstration of priestly power" (60). See also Ann Kibbey, *The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism: A Study of Rhetoric, Prejudice, and Violence* (Cambridge, 1986), 44-59.

²⁰ *Several Conferences*, 38.

²¹ Later, A.E. Crawley describes kneeling as "the abandonment of the erect posture of human active life" which "has been observed among unsophisticated peoples." "Kneeling," 745.

²² A number of studies reveal the complexity of Victorian anti-Catholicism and anti-Ritualism. James Bentley's *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Attempt to Legislate for Belief* (Oxford, 1978) points to anti-ritualism as an essentially political conflict with dimensions both internal (against Anglican "High Church" tendencies) and external (e.g., "Victoria was obsessed with the menace of Rome," 41.). Edward Norman, in: *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984), attributes anti-Catholicism to "the belief that the Papacy was historically dedicated to the subversion of the Crown" (16) and "the superstition of Catholicism, as it was supposed." (18)

²³ Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel* (Cambridge, 1995), 195. This study of iconoclasm in the 1520's shows how "Iconoclasts called attention to the ways the objects in the churches enabled a certain form and manner of worship and participated in a particular conception of divinity: Images were an essential medium of medieval Roman theology." (195) For a discussion of the socio-political dimensions of iconoclasm, see also Eire, *War Against the Idols*, 151-165. For sources on sixteenth-century German iconoclasm, see *A Reformation Debate: Karlstadt, Emser, and Eck on Sacred Images: Three Treatises in Translation*, trans. Bryan D. Mangrum and Giuseppe Scavizzi (Toronto, 1991).

²⁴ Andreas Karlstadt, in *ibid.*, 23.

²⁵ John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: A Description of China and its Inhabitants* (London, 1845), vol. 2, 187.

²⁶ Quoted in Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels*, 78.

²⁷ See, for example, *ibid.*, 96-98. Luther scorned ritualists who were "animated by a concern not for teaching or exhorting, but for performing." (97)

²⁸ J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago, 1987), 102.

²⁹ T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, 1993), 56-60.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

³¹ Adolf E. Jensen, *Myth and Cult Among Primitive Peoples* (Chicago, 1963), 4. The human agent is passive in this mystical moment: "new aspects of reality have revealed themselves to man." (4-5) See also Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, 1982), 42-43; and for a suggestive discussion of the priority of "experience," Gustavo Benavides, "Guiseppe Tucci, or Buddhology in the Age of Fascism," *Curators of the Buddha*, 165.

³² Jensen, *Myth and Cult*, 3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6. The act is an "application" (a formal or mechanical use) rather than an "expression" of *Ergriffenheit*.

³⁵ Smith, *To Take Place*, 103.

³⁶ Quoted in Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 58-59.

³⁷ *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 36.

³⁸ T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁰ Angela Zito, "Ritualizing Li: Implications for Studying Power and Gender," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 1/2 (Fall 1993), 323. Sam Gill makes much the same point in "The Academic Study of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62/4 (Winter 1994), 974.

⁴¹ James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men From Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, 1995), 16.

⁴² John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: a General Description of the Empire of China and its Inhabitants* (London, n.d.), vol. 2, 165.

⁴³ Quoted in Zito, "Ritualizing Li," 321.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Davis, *The Chinese*, vol. 2, 169.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁷ S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom: A Survey of the Geography, Government, Literature, Social Life, Arts, and History of the Chinese Empire and its Inhabitants* (New York, 1907), 191.

⁴⁸ For example: Davis, *The Chinese*, vol. 2, 163, 170, 174-178; William Burder, *The History of All Religions of the World: with Accounts of the Ceremonies and Customs, or the Forms of Worship, Practiced by the Several Nations of the Known World, from the Earliest Records to the Present Time* (New York, 1870), 687, 691; George Staunton's account of the Macartney mission also makes this point: the resemblance is "striking." See also *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from The King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London, 1797), vol. 2, 100. Also, S. Wells Williams links ideals of chastity in Chinese and "Romanist" monasticism. *The Middle Kingdom*, 193. See Charles Hallisey, "Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravada Buddhism," 46.

⁴⁹ J. Greuber, *China and France, or Two Treatises* (London, 1676), 109-110.

⁵⁰ *Several Conferences*, 44.

⁵¹ Ibid., 37.

⁵² Ibid., 224.

⁵³ Pinyin Romanization: *Shangdi*.

⁵⁴ Burder, *The History of All Religions*, 679. W. Gilbert Walshe's article "China" in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* upholds this view: the later developments of Buddhism and Daoism "served to degrade the primitive simplicity and purity" of an original monotheism. Vol. 3, 550.

⁵⁵ Davis, *The Chinese*, vol. 2, 171.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 178.

⁵⁷ Arthur H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics* (New York, 1894), 119.

⁵⁸ S. Rosa, "Seventeenth-Century Catholic Polemic," 91.

⁵⁹ Robert Fortune, *Three Years' Wanderings in The Northern Provinces of China, Including a Visit to the Tea, Silk, and Cotton Countries: with an Account of the Agriculture and Horticulture of the Chinese, new Plants, etc.* (London, 1847), 5.

⁶⁰ Peyrefitte, *Collision*, 147.

⁶¹ Or Ebermann. See Susan Rosa, "Seventeenth-Century Catholic Polemic," 87-107.

⁶² Ibid., 95.

⁶³ Ibid., 97. Of course, it is really the Jesuit's anger here.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 251.

⁶⁵ Keith Thomas, "Introduction," *A Cultural History of Gesture*, eds. Jan Bremmer and Herman Rodenburg (London, 1991), 9.

⁶⁶ Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. II (New York, 1900) [reprint, from 1879 original], 118.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 141-142.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Thomas, "Introduction," 9.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Peyrefitte, *Collision*, 325.

⁷⁰ *The Logic of Practice*, 72.

⁷¹ For example, see George Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, vol. 2, 129-136, 214-215, 218-232.

⁷² Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970): 211. Also Peyrefitte, *Collision*, 513-516.

⁷³ James Hevia, "Sovereign and Subject: Constituting Relations of Power in Qing Guest Ritual," *Body, Subject and Power in China*, eds. Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago, 1994), 185.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Trans. Jon Rothschild (London, 1993). A translation of *L'Empire Immobile ou Le Choc des Mondes*, 1989.

⁷⁶ (Durham, 1995).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 131.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 79.

⁸¹ Peyrefitte, *Collision*, 325.

⁸² Hevia, *Cherishing*, 79.

⁸³ Hevia, *Cherishing*, 234.

⁸⁴ Peyrefitte, *Collision*, 251. Peyrefitte then comments: "Macartney's frequent antipapist flourishes were typical of the time. It was the age of Voltaire." (ibid.)

⁸⁵ Hevia, *Cherishing*, 108.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 79.

⁸⁷ *A Reformation Debate*, trans. Mangrum and Scavizzi, 23.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁸⁹ *Several Conferences*, 37.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 35.

⁹¹ For example, ibid., 197, 453-457.

⁹² Kibbey, *The Interpretation of Material Shapes*, 145.

⁹³ *Principles of Sociology*, vol. 2, 220.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 131.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 143, 223-224.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 118; also 140-141, associating an emphasis on prostration with militarism.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 141-142.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰⁰ John F. Howes, "Uchimura Kanzo: Japanese Prophet," *Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership*, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow (New York, 1970), 188. Also Ishida Takeshi, "The Meaning of "Independence" in the Thought of Uchimura Kanzo," *Culture and Religion in Japanese-American Relations: Essays on Uchimura Kanzo, 1861-1930*, ed. Ray A. Moore (Ann Arbor, 1981), 10-11. According to Ishida, this "most famous incident in his life," provoked "extreme social pressure." (11)

¹⁰¹ The phrase is Foucault's. See his "Technologies of the Self," *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, 1988), 16-49; and Foucault's "Political Technology of Individuals" in the same volume, 145-162.

CONFERENCE

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE "BEYOND PRIMITIVISM: INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND MODERNITY," MARCH 28-31, 1996, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

JACOB K. OLUPONA

A three-day international conference, "Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity" jointly hosted by the African-American and African Studies Program, the Religious Studies Program and the Davis Humanities Institute, was held at the University of California, Davis, March 28-31, 1996. The conference attracted large audiences of faculty, students and interested public from all over the USA. Forty distinguished scholars from fourteen countries in Asia, Europe, the USA, Latin America and Africa explored a number of issues. Foremost among the concerns were the relationship between indigenous religious traditions and modernity and the status of indigenous religions in the academic study of religions.

The foundation of the international conference dates back to 1992 when the American Academy of Religion (AAR) approved the creation of a consultation on indigenous religious traditions. The consultation, now accorded group status in the AAR, has sponsored ongoing analyses of the neglect of indigenous religions in the Academy. Hidden away in the simple phrase "indigenous religious traditions" is a broad spectrum of cultures. These include Native Americans, Australian Aborigines, Hawaiians, Tribal peoples in India, and Africans spread across the globe. Every continent is covered by this term. Yet, these massive populations and distinctive histories find little place in the Academy. The first overarching goal of the Davis conference was to further the discussion begun in 1992 by extending discussion to all areas where indigenous religions form a strong presence. The second goal was to enhance the understanding of indigenous traditions around the world and to make a compelling case for the integration of indigenous religions, their concerns and perspectives into teaching

and research in religious studies in the USA as well as other parts of the world.

The conference was opened at the Native American C.N. Gorman Museum with welcoming speeches by Provost Robert Grey and the Dean of Humanities, Arts and Culture, Kern Holoman. The University's Black Repertoire Dance Troupe, choreographed by Bobbie Wynn Bolden, staged a performance set in the context of Trinidad's and Barbados' Spiritual Baptist traditions, symbolizing a "synthesis" of Afro-Caribbean indigenous and Christian symbols. This extraordinary performance drew in our guests and set the tone for the conference presentations which began that evening in the Memorial Union Building.

To ensure that the central theme of the conference was treated from many points of view, the sessions progressed from historical issues to ideological issues, to cross-cultural perspectives on indigenous religions' responses to modernity, to the prospects for the study and teaching of indigenous religions in the Academy. Thirty papers were presented in eight sessions. Following are summaries of the central issues in the papers, and then some concluding remarks from the exchanges and debates that ensued through the course of the conference.

The plenary session, entitled "Perspectives of Indigenous Religions in the History of Religions," consisted of four speakers. The first speaker, Charles Long (University of California, Santa Barbara), in his paper "A Post-Colonial Meaning of Religions: Some Reflections from the Indigenous World," confronted the language problems that underlay the central core of the discussions on indigenous traditions, especially the power structures reflected in that language. He observed that the very term adopted for the conference theme, "indigenous," which means in its conventional sense "home," recalls the structure of colonial power and colonial projects which took place away from the colonizers own homes. Long also observed that history as we have it today does not reflect the truth about the relationships and encounters between the indigenous peoples and the colonizers. He suggested the need for an "archeology of knowledge" with re-

gard to the key analytical terms we use in religious studies, including “primitivism, natives, religion,” etc. The cultural, ideological, and linguistic parameters of our tools must be acknowledged so that conversations do not happen at cross-purposes.

David Chidester’s (University of Cape Town, South Africa) paper, “‘Classify and Conquer’: Friedrich Max Müller, Indigenous Traditions, and Imperial Comparative Religion,” advocated relocating the study of religion in the colonial contexts. He asserted that indigenous religions, what Max Müller called “religions without books,” were central to the emergence of the modern study of religion. He examined Max Müller’s formative role in the emergence of imperial comparative religion, suggesting like Charles Long, that knowledge and power played significant roles in the emergence of a frontier comparative religion which began with a denial that indigenous people had a religion.

In her paper on “Rethinking Religious Traditions: The Ainu Case,” Katarina Sjoborg (Lund University, Sweden) brought to our attention a neglected indigenous group in Asia, the Ainu. Her presentation focused on the religious traditions of the Hokkando Ainu of Japan, especially the transformative processes their religion and culture have passed through in modern Japan. Contrary to the perceived knowledge, which regards Japanese culture and people as homogenous, the Ainu construct a separate religious and cultural identity from the rest of the Japanese. Some participants raised the difficult question of the impact of outside influences on the natives’ reconstruction, if not invention of their own tradition. Also difficult is the delicate issue of commercialization of Ainu traditions and other indigenous traditions, as the paper by Helen McCarthy on New Age Spirituality would show later. The implications of this for the study of indigenous religion are several. With the expansion of “public space” the study of religion, especially by outsiders, makes the religion public: the presence of tourists or scholars have significant effects on these traditions. But it also means that religion is created for the main purpose of studying it. It thus challenges the view that one can be neutral in the study of these traditions.

Presenting “The Inclusion and Exclusion of Indigenous Religions in the Academic Study of Religion during the 19th and 20th Centuries,” Armin Geertz (University of Aarhus, Denmark) explored the contradictions between the central and inclusive role played by indigenous cultures in the development of theory in the social and cultural sciences on the one hand and on the other hand, the systematic exclusion, marginalization and invisibility of living indigenous peoples in those same sciences. He suggested that these discrepancies can be explained through the history and evolution of “primitivism” in European and American thought. Geertz is of the opinion that the progress of deconstructing inherited traditions from the West is tedious and not enough by itself without the important task of constructing more ethical and accurate models and paradigms. As a practical solution, he proposed a “cleansing of the Enlightenment,” a critical rationality and a reassertation of certain aspects of the Enlightenment project. The paper and its Enlightenment thesis provoked predictable discussion that continued throughout the conference. Geertz, in reaction to the several criticisms of the Enlightenment, especially the accusation that “it got us into this predicament” or that the Enlightenment never held humanism for the colonized, observed that it was a mistake to assume a casual relation between the enlightenment and colonialism. In the discussion Kay Flavell (University of California, Davis), stepped in to clarify the confusion between the “Enlightenment project” as a utopian model and “the Enlightenment” as a period term. Concerning the latter, she asserted that “we cannot go back to the hypothetical solution because no such solution to the problem of a world of multiple epistemologies, political orders and religion was forced by the 18th Century figures.” Flavell rejects Habermas’s view on the Enlightenment project, who understands by it “the need to create a shared space for communicative action, based on agreement about what constitutes rational action.” She finds a more plausible answer in Ann Salmond’s work, *Two Worlds First Meetings: between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772* (Viking: Auckland, 1991) where she argues that comparative epistemology must work through combining historical, linguistic, and anthropological resources and methods on

both sides of every cross-cultural encounter. This double-sided image, in which there is never just one language acting as the interpretive ground and in which we must confront the problems of translation, seems an improvement on Habermas.

The second day of the conference started with a session entitled "Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on Indigenous Religions and Modernity." Chaired by Emily Albu (University of California, Davis). Three papers were presented. John Mohawk (State University of New York, Buffalo) gave the lecture, "Tribal Religious Traditions are Constantly Devalued in Western Discourses on Religion." In this he provided an overview and interpretation of the entire history of the colonial West as it has influenced the new perception of indigenous religious traditions and indigenous peoples. He contends that indigenous knowledge, religion and peoples are not part of the European metanarrative of perfectibility and human agency. The western version of its own history fails to incorporate later alternative views of reality. He sees the current resurgence in indigenous spirituality as a form of resistance against colonialism and the forces which seek to dominate native religion and cultures. Like Armin Geertz's paper, Mohawk's presentation generated a lot of debate. In Mohawk's reaction to what received scholarship has to say with regard to Native American people, Mohawk favored a dialogue involving only natives. He remarked that indigenous people must decide if they want to bring the notion of who they are to academic discourse. Mohawk contends that there must be an independent life inside native discourses. The culture must be able to define itself and its own legitimacy and reject values projected on it by the Academy. He believes that irrelevance is good, to the extent that if an indigenous group is irrelevant or views the Western narrative about them as irrelevant, they are empowered.

Several people in the audience considered such a stand as counter-productive and the stakes too high if outsiders are completely kept out of participating in Native discourses. They are of the view that the task of teaching and research should be a project of mutual engagement between "insiders" and "outsiders." Gananath Obeyesekere (Princeton University) remarked that whether we like it or not indige-

nous traditions must argue with the Enlightenment tradition. Indigenous traditions must not close the door, but be contentious and argue against the Western epistemologies.

In the next paper, "Integrating Indigenous Religious Traditions into the General Theories of Religion," Larry Sullivan began with an observation that the notion of theory, in general, has been no friend to indigenous religious traditions since it has an imperialist and hegemonic stance toward them. He then described a notion of the significance of the concepts of theory that work better for indigenous traditions. He delineated several domains in which indigenous religious traditions are making or will make important contributions to general theory in the study of religions. These include the realms of imagination, performance, thoughts and cognition, and the possibility of reframing academic traditions in light of indigenous religions. Finally, he examined an underlying current in the relationship between indigenous religious traditions and the study of religions as a theorizing endeavor in the Academy.

In his essay "Religious Imperialism and Its Victims: Resisting the Erasure of those who Resist," Bruce Lincoln (University of Chicago) explored micronarratives (folk myths) of the Guatemalan indigenous peoples (the *naturales*) and attempted to question the historical erasure of local traditions that have resisted domination and oppression. The narratives which constitute an interesting genre are best told as drama or sometimes tragedy and provide significant sources of information about the indigenous past. Lincoln noted that there is often a vast difference between actual events and the way they are recorded by the victors, echoing similar points made in Charles Long's and John Mohawk's presentations. Lincoln then called for a broader scope of the study of religion that would treat world religions as historically emergent temporal phenomena. He challenged theorists to recognize the local resistance with which advancing world religions are met.

Four papers were presented in the third session, "Local and Global Character of Indigenous Religions and the Challenge to Modernity," chaired by David Westerlund (University of Uppsala, Sweden). Garry

Trompf's (University of Sydney, Australia) paper, "Melanesians and Cargo," reexamined the old concern of "wonder" with regards to the Melanesians and the interactions with the "Cargo." He reviewed the history of the study of religion in the regions and the various interpretations of and meanings projected into the key elements of Melanesian traditions, such as *mana*. Trompf concluded that western intellectuals have used the notion of wonder to create the culture of the "primitive" in the region. As such he suggested a rethinking of several of the old theories and concepts that are embedded in some of the durable classics in the field. In response to a question from the floor, "Why did the 'Cargo' develop in Melanesia and not in Australia?" Trompf responded that Cargoism is not a feature of opposition and in addition, mobilization of movements is easier in denser populated Melanesia. The term was created for Melanesia, though the notion of "Cargoism"—the desire for modern things—is present also in Australia.

Karen Brown's (Drew University) paper "Vodou in the 'Tenth Department,' New York's Haitian Community" explored the impact of prejudice on the Haitian community in the USA, focusing on New York in particular, and the effect that the perverse will to misunderstand Haitian religion has had on religious practices which have taken on a dualistic nature. Vodou or the service of the Spirits, permeated all areas of the practitioner's life. Because it is reviled and considered a non-religion, the Haitians construct their religions in relation to this, they hide, dissimulated as Catholics and speak in two languages. 85% of Haitian immigrants serve some of the Vodou Spirits. Haiti has nine "departments" that has led New York Haitians to refer to themselves as the "Tenth Department." Brown described the New York Haitian community as "transnational." She observed that a dynamic link is maintained between life in United States and Haiti that serves and sustains the community. As an example, Brown talked about the homemade taping of Haitian news that is flown from Haiti, and copied and distributed the next day. Brown's paper underscored the significance of a category of religion that has creatively combined elements from a variety of West African indigenous religions with

western traditions to produce a 'bricolage' of religious practices, also known as "creolization." African-derived spirituality in the Americas such as *Santería* (Afro-Cuban) and *Candomblé* (Afro-Brazilian) religions constitute innovative traditions in the contemporary United States. Brown remarked, in response to a question as to what constitutes the theology of Vodou, that it does not have a theology or a belief. They do not have any continuous official history that can be consulted to establish authenticity. She described it as "Streams of changing continuity." Religion is not a choice for most people; the family, group participation and actions are the issues of Haitian religion, not belief.

In "At the End of the Day: Reflections on Mother Nature and Human Nature," Inés Talamantez (University of California, Santa Barbara) examined the significance of Nature and ecology for Native American spirituality, especially her own nation, the Apache people. She talked about the importance of native language in doing research into indigenous traditions. This is because foreign languages and the language of the Colonizers do not provide adequate tools for the understanding of indigenous world views and practices. The subsequent discussion focused on this last aspect of Talamantez' presentation. Jack Forbes (University of California, Davis) remarked that English as a language is too narrowly oriented and is very limited for native discourses because Native American's languages are verb based; "Giving thanks" is the core of Spiritual life. "Seeking health" is another activity. "Expressing kinship" and respect are also spiritual life.

The last paper in the session was presented by Alfred López Austin (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) who presented a paper in Spanish entitled "Planteamientos para el Estudio de la Tradición Religiosa" (loosely translated, "Guidelines for the study of Mesoamerican Religious Traditions"). The paper surveyed the religious traditions of Mesoamerica in its interaction with Christianity since the 1519 Spanish invasion. He argued that with the onslaught of enforced Christianity came the religious development of colonial indigenous religions: a hybrid of religions, combining Christian and

Mesoamerican ideas. What remains today is a reworking of symbols, resulting in a discrimination against adherents of a strictly speaking indigenous traditions devoid of Christian elements. This is a significant discovery, especially given the reverse situation among African derived traditions in the USA. African American adherents of Orisa (Yoruba) religion abhor the Santería tradition in which Yoruba Indigenous traditions are mixed with Catholic spirituality.

Lopez's presentation also raised the vexing issue of Christian monotheism and religious "syncretism," though the latter has become quite pejorative in spite of recent anthropological efforts to rescue the term from oblivion. On monotheism, Lopez remarked that it has many meanings. In Mesoamerica one god is recognizable but divinity is a summation of all other divinities. But monotheism as an all-powerful singular essence was absent in Mesoamerica. As regards "syncretism," Lopez argued that there is no strict prohibition about observing other traditions, but there is a battle about how to do it. The notion of "syncretism" must be understood with the realization that one of the traditions must form the foundation. Karen Brown, during the discussion which followed, reminded the audience that monotheism and a single religious allegiance are different things, noting that people seek out multiple religious allegiances where religion is very important to life.

Session four, chaired by John Stewart (University of California, Davis) on "Popular Images of Indigenous Religions: Ideology and Paradoxes," had four case studies. Micheo Araki's (Toshiba University, Japan) paper, "Popular Religion in Japan" explored the problem of cultural contact in Japan as it relates to the rise of new religions, Japanese folk religions and the whole of Japanese religious traditions. He examined the broad implications of the applicability of a 'western approach' to the study of Japanese traditions and, called for a closer examination of the concepts as they are applied to the study of Japanese popular religion and Native traditions. Araki's paper gave the audience an opportunity to ask about new religious movements in Japan, and especially the controversial, *Asahore*, a semi divine charismatic leader. He remarked that the government does not sup-

port New Religious Movements (NRMs) because it works against the homogeneity of Japanese identity and nation. Whereas in the post-war situation the government was tolerant of NRMs, recently it has become a political issue as Japanese people are manipulated by scandalous NRMs. The suppression of heterodox religious movements is related to the suppression of the religious life of the native people. The difference though is that the suppression of the native traditions, such as the Ainu, is related to the history of colonization and the issue of land and resources.

Steve Friesen (University of Missouri, Columbia) discussed, "The Hawaiian Lei on a Voyage through Modernities: A Study in Post-Contact Religion." While several papers questioned the meaning and usefulness of the term "indigenous," Friesen argued that it would also be helpful to examine the term "modernity." Colonial archives do not contain information about a monolithic modernity. They reveal instead many modernities at any given time and place, modernities that are negotiated or imposed in specific historical moments. He then traced changing understandings of the floral lei as it moved through some of these modernities in early twentieth century Hawai'i. Analyzed in this way, the lei reveals several developments in post-contact Hawai'i. One development was in religious life. The lei began as a crafted religious object that bound the community together through appropriate exchanges. By the mid twentieth century, it had become an object for special occasions rather than a part of normal life; and a commodity that was bought and sold rather than one that was personally made and given. These transformations suggest that in order to deal adequately with indigenous religion, we will need to define religion in ways that are not restricted to the experiences of post-contact modernities. We will need to account for: community cohesion in a situation where there is no "sacred" or "secular;" for the inequities of post-contact relationships; and for the role of economies in shaping religious life. The debate that followed focused on the relationship between Lei Day and tourism. Friesen remarked that while tourism is important, it is not totally crucial because other holidays have been created specifically for tourists. It is however, an

important chapter in the study of the changes in religious symbols and perhaps an example of how indigenous religious traditions re-enchant western culture.

The next presentation by Ines Hernandez-Avila (University of California, Davis) "La Mesa del Santo Niño de Atocha and the Conchero Dance Tradition of Mexico-Tenochtitlan," explained the conchero tradition of Mexico City from the perspective of la Mesa del Santo Nino de Atocha. The paper showed how this tradition (and this group) has sustained itself and contributed to the elaboration of a Chicana/Chicano indigenous consciousness and identity. The Conchero dance tradition encoded an ancient Mexican belief-system and Hernandez-Avila aptly demonstrated its complex religious and symbolic meanings. The paper clearly illustrated how indigenous traditions utilize dance as a mode of transcendence and approach to the sacred. The paper also drew parallels between the contemporary conchero dance traditions and the works of David Carrasco on spatial metaphors.

Helen McCarthy's (Cultural Resource Research and Consulting, Davis) paper "Sacred Mountains: Shamans vs New Age Merchants of Nirvana," called our attention to one of the most disturbing issues in indigenous religions in contemporary America, the adoption and appropriation of indigenous religious symbols and rituals by New Age spiritualists. The author reviewed the importance of sacred landscape for Native American religions, and focusing on Mount Shasta, one of California's sacred mountains, she recalled the assault on the mountain by people seeking new religious symbols and meaning. She observed that forces of modernity have tried to rob Native Americans of their religious heritage and the struggle over the control of Mount Shasta is one example of several such cases in the USA. She observed that throwing crystals into the spring along with other New Age activities is tantamount to leaving a slaughtered black cat on a Christian altar. Today, McCarthy noted, the sacred mountain is most threatened by "New Agers" and people seeking non-Christian and non-Western forms of religious expression. New Agers are a product of modernity and symptoms of a greater assault on indigenous religions.

Several participants raised the problem of indigenous people themselves incorporating New Age notions and symbols into their traditions. It is often the case in such instances that New Agers are allowed because of the economic profit it brings to the people. The indigenous tradition then becomes an economic commodity. One is reminded here of similar commercialization of Indigenous traditions such as African traditions in Europe and the Americas, Mexican dances in the USA, Sacred Mountains in Zimbabwe. In the conclusion to the session, the question was raised: "How does a religious community sustain itself in the context of the octopus intrusion of commodification?" Several participants agreed that we may be unable to protect sacred symbols from commodification.

On Saturday morning we assembled for the fifth session titled "Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity: Cross-Cultural Perspective" chaired by Jack Forbes (University of California, Davis). The first paper, jointly written by Terence Ranger and Jocelyn Alexander (Anthony College, Oxford University) "Competition and Integration in the Religious History of North-Western Zimbabwe," provided an ethnographic account of the religious history of Metabeleland in North-Western Zimbabwe. Drawing from personal research in the region, Ranger and Alexander examined the interaction of various religious traditions in the history of North-Western Zimbabwe. The authors explored the history of the region, noting political circumstances in the 1950's which forced immigration of individuals who brought with them new religious ideas. The religious tension created at that time was played out in the wars of the 1970's and 1980's. In their conclusion, Ranger and Alexander looked forward to the future wondering what integration and competition among religious ideas will be like as the region continues to change politically. The paper raised some critical theoretical and conceptual issues in response to some of the complex debates of the first three days. In Metabeleland, they argued, the concept of indigenous is complex. It is difficult to know who is indigenous in this region because people were moved in by the colonial states, it was dumping and they encountered the local people for whom they had contempt. Here a different

kind of picture of indigenous religions surfaced. Unlike the general image of indigenous as local and microcosmic and Christianity as global, the reverse is the case here. Mission Christianity created small-scale villages, whereas African religious systems are not microcosmic. They are linked to the land but are transnational, not linked to any language group with their clients coming from everywhere: people speaking different languages come to the shrine thus making them super-national. Ranger observed that history in Zimbabwe is dialogical, and he favors collaborative research between natives and non-natives. Indeed, Zimbabweans as in several other African nations encourage it. He observed that there is intense discussion and debate by collaborators about this history which is contentious and multi-vocal. He also remarked that "Africa is the historical continent par excellence; discourse about Africa is discourse in history." There are strong historical narratives within African religions based on strong narratives of historical succession and legitimacy. On the role and significance of Christianity vis-a-vis, indigenous traditions, he remarked that the Christian history in Zimbabwe is very different from other places where there is an alliance between mission and the colonial state. The difference is that Christianity arrived here in Zimbabwe via African bearers, not missionaries, and Christianity therefore became a marker of identity and new modernism.

Ranger's paper was followed by Flora Kaplan's presentation "Understanding Sacrifice and Sanctity in Benin Indigenous Religion, Nigeria: A Case History," which provided an interpretation of Benin religious world view and social system. She emphasized the significant role of the Benin sacred king (Oba) and royal ceremonies in sanctification of the Benin cosmos and the maintenance of Benin society. In Benin religion, secrecy and knowledge are tied together.

The next presentation by Chris Jocks (Dartmouth College) titled "Modernity and the Resistance among the Iroquois Longhouse People," centered on the struggle of the Kahnawaske, a longhouse community in Quebec, Canada, with the destructive forces of modernity. He examined two aspects of Iroquois resistance: the image of the Mohawk man, and the Iroquois education system which aimed to

combat the homogenizing efforts of modernity. Jocks called for a reexamination of what constitutes religions. Colonial labeling of religion is incorrect, but can one ever correctly explain practice and thought, he asked. Religion is not just a system of symbols but a system of relationships among individuals and the collective.

In an echo of John Mohawk's presentation a day earlier, he observed that in American narratives, Indians seem to show up at the most inopportune and unexpected times, outside the central core narratives. The conception of Indians is that they are flawed, unstable and weak, unable to sustain themselves. In the 19th century there was no more strongly held belief among European settlers than that Indians should disappear, and there was massive physical elimination of Indians by European settlers. The portrayal of that violence was to romanticize the so-called pioneers in the frontiers. He emphasized that American myths of conquest operated with the idea that the few well known cases of violence were unrepresentative of the violence of the conqueror. The few acknowledged instances were viewed as if they are deviations from the true character of American civilization. Jocks insisted that we must accurately portray the assault and genocide to understand the inability of these cultures to sustain themselves. In a metaphoric sense, he remarked that the ground itself is poisoned by the history of relationships between the Academy and the natives. Jocks would prefer a more action oriented response to the problems of the "poisoned" relationship than an austere academic discourse: Longhouse epistemology is epistemology of action not theory, and knowledge is instituted in action.

Richard Ground's (University of Oklahoma) paper: "Where are the Indians: Genocide and the interpretation of Native American traditions" traced the history of genocide and observes that we have a false notion of the problem since genocide is always clouded under disguises. Thus legal, moral and religious justification are given as excuses for this elision. He remarked that the Native American mission and the idea of America as a millennium makes it difficult to come to terms with the nature of genocide.

Zoila Mendoza-Walker (University of California, Davis) chaired session six, "Indigenous Religious Traditions and the Modernity: Cross Cultural Perspectives." Three case studies were discussed from Europe, Asia and the Pacific. Hakan Rydving's essay, "Saami Responses to Modernity: Resistance and Change," examined the situation of the Saami (Lapps) of Scandinavia. Rydving proposed that certain elements of the religion are still carried out and some shape the practices of Christianity, a phenomena that is commonly seen in other parts of the world. The paper then gave an overview of some aspects of Saami religion from the 17th century to the present, focusing on two key elements: how the various Saami groups react differently when facing the forced process of religious change; and how various elements of the indigenous Saami tradition respond to contacts and confrontation with modernity. In his response to a question regarding gender, Rydving remarked that Saami religion is clearly divided along gender lines. Men and women have distinct rituals, there is however a unity in the religion as both sexes also take part in joint ceremonies. He also observed that the accusation of witchcraft was used against the Saami men, not women, as is the case in most parts of the world, the reason being that women appeared more receptive to Christianity.

Laurel Kendall's paper "Korean Shamanism and the Definition of Religion: An Overview from the Grass roots" explored the idea of "religion" as a construct or category and its applicability to the Korean Shamanic practices. She examined several sources including observations of Auntie Chun, an aspiring Korean Shaman, relevant anthropological theories and historical studies to problematize the concept of religion as it is applied to the Korean Shaman's world in the face of modernity. Kendall's paper resonated with Karen Brown's and Bruce Lincoln's continuity paradigm. Shamanism does not conform to the classic notions of religion in western traditions. It represents a stream of continuity with the Korean past. Shamanism is today seen as a Korean cultural treasure; Indigenous Korean religion receives quasi-legitimation from the government. The cultural nationalists have moved the tradition from the jaws of superstition to

the center of the religious universe of Korea. Kendall also observed that Shamanism is a female activity in Korea partly because of the notions of “outside” and “inside,” where the inside is women’s zone and is also where one discusses the private issues. As a result of the increased economic interest and government requirements, Shamanism has developed a form of professionalism. Schools of Shamanism are beginning, as are study groups. While the moral portrayed of Shamanism in public is disreputable, occasionally one sees Shamans who are well spoken, and on television, and try to represent themselves as national treasures. How do all these relate to the emergence and popularity of Christian Pentecostal movements and the big success story of Christianity in modern Korea? Some Korean Christians believe Shamanic practices work because Satan has a vested interest in their working. On the other hand, there is a striking similarity in both, in the sense that like Korean Shamanism, Pentecostalism shares the notion of prayer as an instrumental means to success.

Mary MacDonald’s (Le Moyne College) paper was entitled “God and the Ancestors in Melanisia.” The paper argued that today some ninety percent of Melanesians identify themselves as Christians while at the same time they affirm traditions of the ancestors. Most Melanesians use indigenous rituals and indigenous mythology as well as Christian rituals and mythology in negotiating their daily concerns of health, wealth and fertility. She further argued that in negotiating their daily regional and national concerns, the Melanesians tend to appeal to the universal notions of Christianity and to see these as extensions of the indigenous wisdom. Jesus is, for example, portrayed as the ideal brother concerned not only for his own clan but for all people.

Presenting “Tribal Situations in India: Stratification, Identity Crisis and Religious Reforms in Indigenous Religions,” Maklan Jha (Ranchi University, India) claimed that there are 427 *adhivasis* (tribals) in India though most tribals are becoming Hindu: Indeed more than 80% of the tribals pray to both Hindu and their own gods. Jha presented an overview of the tribal stratification in India and offered a review of different theoretical frameworks in their anthropological

study. He also explored some of the history of India's solidarity and reform movements in an attempt to bring to us an understanding of the marginalization of Indian tribal groups in the academic and scholarly arenas. In discussion, questions were raised about how difficult it is to determine what makes a tribe a tribe, and whether tribals are categories of nature or cultural construction. Linda Hess (University of California, Berkeley), in the audience, noted the lack of historical and political contents associated with the tribal classification. Also the implicit references to the "superior Hindu tradition" indicated to her a subtext of Hindu nationalism. This makes our understanding of tribal identity in India very problematic.

Session Seven: "Beyond East and West: Encounters Between Indigenous Religions and other Traditions," chaired by Julian Kunnie (University of Arizona, Tuscon) consisted of three papers. Each offered an account of the interaction between an indigenous religion and one or two world religions: Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. The first paper, "Where have all the Veddas gone? Buddhism and Aboriginality in Sri Lanka" by Gananath Obeyesekere (Princeton University), examined the interaction of the Veddas and the Sinhala, the two predominant groups in Sri Lanka. Obeyesekere asked two questions about the Veddas: Who were they?, and Where have they gone? After a review of the history of research on the Veddas, he concluded that for the 'where,' the Veddas are being absorbed by the Sinhala, and that, for the 'who,' the Veddas are distinguishable from the Sinhala only by the Sinhala's adherence to Buddhism. Obeyesekere dismissed any notion that the Veddas are an indigenous people being destroyed by modernity; instead, he offered that they are a group, like the Sinhala, who have interacted and exchanged religious and cultural ideas with their neighbors over a long historical period. The paper illustrated the fate that has befallen several other 'little' traditions as they inevitably face the all powerful and conquering forces of proselytizing missionary traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

Aram Yengoyan (University of California, Davis) presented "Mandaya Myth and the Heroic Religious Traditions: Between Islam and

Christianity,” a case study of the interaction of indigenous religions and Islam and Christianity in the Philippines. He argued that the Mandaya have come to exist alongside Christianity and Islam, selectively incorporating these other traditions. He reviewed the Mandaya religious systems and the oratory forms used in their myth and history. He observed that the impact of Islam and Christianity on the Mandaya is best understood on two levels: the socio-economic and the religious. The interaction is not unique, but shows how religious systems built on local context reach to modern world religions.

The next paper in the session, “Jews and Natives: Stanley Tambiah on Magic, Science and Religion,” by Naomi Janowitz (University of California, Davis) offered a critique of Stanley Tambiah’s book *Magic, Science and Religion*. Janowitz raised some theoretical issues for discussion, “What is the state of the art of the relationship between indigenous and western religions in terms of the theory of rituals?” Often we assume through erroneous popular differentiation that the indigenous people have magic and we have rituals. Tambiah’s argument that when we use universal rationality as a yardstick for evaluating other cultures, we run into the problem of relativity, is a critique of Robin Horton’s own work on the issue of western science and African thought. Instead of looking for causality, Tambiah favors the performative theory of rituals. Janowitz contended especially that Tambiah’s use of the Jewish data and his understanding of the Jewish concept of ritual is problematic, as is his rationale for the perceived efficacy of ritual.

Whalen Lai’s (University of California, Davis) essay, “The Mother Sutra: A Revival of Primal Religion in late 19th Century China” analyzed an ancient Chinese text, the Earth mother Sutra, as an example of the revival of primal religion in the Chinese Imperial rule of the late 19th century China. Lai argued that there is no clear indication that it came about as a result of a response to the crisis of modernity as was the case in the resurgence of Shamanistic cults in the same period in Korea and Japan. Rather, Spirit writings witnessed a revival as a professed medium for new revelatory texts. Lai’s paper raised an interesting issue about the relationship between indigenous religions

and written texts, and the use of written texts as sources for the study of these traditions.

The eighth and concluding session titled, "Rethinking the Place of Indigenous Religions in the Academic Study of Religions" was chaired by Philip Arnold (Syracuse University). Two papers were read, and concluding remarks were given by the convener Jacob Olupona (UC Davis). Tu Wei-Ming (Harvard University) presented "The Enlightenment Heritage and the Indigenous Religious Traditions," in which he attempted to reverse some of the negative labels and sharp criticisms that the Enlightenment tradition has received especially in the last three days of the conference. Tu argued that non-western traditions by virtue of their exposure to western culture and society have also benefited from the Enlightenment heritage. The paradox is that we cannot afford to accept uncritically its assumption nor can we reject its relevance. He pleaded for a more intellectually balanced response that will recognize the indebtedness to and liability of the Enlightenment heritage. Tu Wei-Ming criticized Habermas's project because of its inattentiveness to ethical and religious dimensions of life. He therefore underscored the need to explore the spiritual resources of non-western traditions and to broaden the scope of the discourse in religious studies. Non-western spiritual resources, especially Islam, Judiasm and indigenous religions should be an integral part of self-reflexivity. Why, for example, should Islam be seen as the radically "other" rather than an integral part of the self-reflexivity and as our conversational partner?"

The discussion that followed led to more clarification of some of the issues raised in the course of the conference, especially the complex relationship between the Enlightenment and indigenous religions. At the end of the debate, several people felt that we must avoid reversing the valuation and recreating the dichotomy between the two. Sophie Oluwole (University of Lagos, Nigeria), who would present the next and final paper, remarked that the conference should address the Enlightenment fiction about primitives, develop criticisms of the heritage and not simply trash the Enlightenment and the western discourse. We concluded on the note that we need to recognize the

complexity of the European Enlightenment and that it is not simply a black and white issue.

Sophie Oluwole presented a paper on “Academic Discourse and Indigenous African Religions,” in which she challenged the various interpretations and formulations of meaning provided in the understanding of African religious world views and thought patterns by Africans and western scholars alike. She observed that we still live with pre-Socratics who were the first to create rationality as separate from an indigenous connection to earth, place, and religion. She criticized system building that attempts to systematize African religions. Using the Yoruba people of Nigeria as an example, she observed that ‘system’ is not a way that the Yoruba think. Systematizing leaves out real human experiences which are often contradictory and chases out subtleties. People live everyday with dramatic life which has emotional sentiment and cannot be systematized and dealt with serially.

Three papers whose authors were unavoidably absent were circulated. The first was Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney’s (University of Wisconsin-Madison) essay “Ground-Level Religiosity and Modernity,” in which she examined the dynamic nature of societies, cultures and religions and focuses on Japanese religiosity with respect to views about super-human entities (beings considered more powerful than ordinary humans such as gods or ancestors) and beliefs about the souls. The author asserted that religiosity for the Japanese and many other peoples, is expressed in non-formalized and non-institutionalized religious beliefs and forms the powerful basis of religion. For her, religion as practice or lived experiences, defined changing meaning through time.

The second essay was by Diane Bell (College of the Holy Cross, Worcester), the co-chair of the Indigenous Religions Group at its creation a few years ago. In her paper, “Australian Aboriginal Religion: Feminist Query,” she traced the dialogue between the feminist ethnographic work, discipline and theory, with the state, law and the Academy. She critiqued the marginal role that female Aboriginal religion has been assigned in traditional discourse, as well as internally within male dominated Aboriginal religion.

Lastly, David Carrasco (Princeton University) wrote on “Jaguar Christians in the Contact Zone: Mesoamerican Perspectives.” This presentation emerged from a reflection on a text in the Chilean *Balom* of Tizimin, a colonial Maya manuscript, describing the meeting of Spanish Christians and Yucatec Maya from the perspective of the Maya. The text addressed the ways in which strangers became intimate enemies through the imposition of clothes, theology, ritual and the transculturation of these elements by Maya Shamans and priests. The paper drew on recent scholarship about cross cultural perspectives through a focus on the notion of the “Contact Zone” developed by Mary Louise Pratt, Greg Dening and David Carrasco himself.

Other participants and discussants included Tabitha Kanogo (University of California, Berkeley), Simeon Ilesanmi (Wake Forest University), Pash Obeng (Harvard University), Julian Kunnie (Kalamazoo College), David Westerlund (Uppsala University), Jualynne Dudson (University of Colorado at Boulder), Philip Arnold (Syracuse University) and John Grim (Bucknell University).

In his closing remarks, conference organizer Jacob Olupona summarized some of the things the conference had achieved in the last three days. He aptly suggested that the meeting had sensitized all participants to issues and debates that are central to the study and practice of indigenous religions. As he remarked, “The conference has challenged us all to think more deeply about the complex theoretical and practical problems involved in indigenous religions and their academic study.” He acknowledged that naming, defining and conceptualizing these traditions is highly problematic and suggested that perhaps we should simply regard them as working nomenclatures and definitions. He observed that even the very notion of what is “religion” is problematic. The daily religious activities in indigenous traditions had to be seen to be imbedded in culture and civilization. In addition, the historical—especially the colonial and pre-colonial situations—affects the very way traditions are practiced and contested.

The colonial intrusion and the persistence of indigenous religions and practices alongside the religion of dominant conquering powers

was an important factor in the discussion. So was the problem of “othering” of indigenous religions and colonized people with the use of such categories as “natives.” The issue of methodology and approach surfaced in several of the papers. We were of the opinion that our sources—whether they are oral traditions, historical narratives, or archival materials—should be critically examined to ensure that unbiased reporting of traditions is possible. There also reemerged the question of who is qualified to study indigenous religions: Who is an “insider” and who is an “outsider”? While no common ground was reached, many felt that what is essential here is that whoever studies the tradition as well as the people who own it should be willing to take stock of his/her own cultural construction. A strong voice from the conference suggested that while ethnographic description and interpretation of the native traditions may be worthy of attention for academic purposes, the actual tradition being “objectively” studied should be of interest in themselves; the human significance of the project should not be lost.

At the same time, several of the papers implicitly demonstrated the need to relate our work to the larger issues of ethnicity, race, gender and politics: the Native American realities before, during and after the conquests; the African slave trade; colonial and post-colonial experiences; and in the contemporary period, the alliance of western multinational corporations with African dictators who at the expense of indigenous populations all affect our study of indigenous religions. The Enlightenment tradition featured in several of the papers provoked passionate discussion. While it received sharp criticisms from some participants, others argued that non-Western traditions by virtue of their exposures to Western culture and society have also benefited from the Enlightenment heritage. One participant argued that the paradox is that we cannot afford to accept uncritically its assumptions nor can we reject its relevance.

The Enlightenment tradition and rationality will undoubtedly continue to be a topic in several meetings of indigenous religions, but the Davis conference ended with the consensus that we need to keep an open and friendly dialogue with colleagues interested in the En-

lightenment project because in the matters of this nature, “we are all coupled at the hip,” as one participant rightly stated.

Reflecting on the future agenda, the convener urged the participants to see the conference as an ongoing, international discussion on the relevance of indigenous religious traditions to the academic study of religions and society. The role played by indigenous religions in the contemporary world—in preserving and reconfiguring many societies and cultures—is enormous. He expressed the hope that the conference will lead to similar initiatives in other institutions in the near future. The participants suggested strongly that their colleagues in colleges and universities include the perspectives of these traditions in the multiple discussions that are ranging through the various programs in and outside USA. They expressed the hope that the dissemination of the results of this conference will encourage more institutions to take interests in teaching and research in indigenous religions. A volume emanating from the conference will be published next year.

The conference was made possible by funding provided from the University of California, Davis; the University of California Humanities Institute, Irvine; the University of California, Davis Humanities Institute; the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research; Office of the President, University of California, Oakland; the Niwano Peace Foundation Japan; the Spalding Trust U.K. In the planning of the conference we were assisted by various people including Steven Freisen, Emily Albu, Bobbie Bolden, Wendy Terry, Justine Davis, Preston Rudy, George Sanchez, Aklil Bekele, Gladys Bell, Ronald Saufley, Tom Stratton and Kimberly Tyler-James.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ROBIN HÄGG (Ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence*. Proceedings of the Second International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, organized by the Swedish Institute at Athens, 22-24 November 1991 (Acta Instituti Atheniensis Sueciae, series in 8°, 13)—Stockholm, 1994 (184 p.), ISBN 91-7916-029-8.

Once again, Robin Hägg organized a seminar that brought together philologists, archaeologists and historians of religion. He chose as the subject of the meeting a genre of evidence for ancient Greek cults, which tends to be disregarded, as it has become a specialized field of its own. Thus the seminar had to bridge a widening gap. The result is extremely valuable. Sarah Aleshire asks (pp. 9-16) whether our modern distinction between “private” and “state cult,” e.g., in the healing cult of Asklepios at Athens, are ancient categories. Kevin Clinton shows (17-34) for the same cult how the new god’s festivals form part of an established and flourishing feast, the *Epidauria*. Michael Jameson presents “*Theoxenia*” (pp. 35-57), which originally formed a part of his unpublished 1949 dissertation. The old question of how the gods are imagined to take part in the human institution of social meals, can now be answered with newly discovered material, which is comprehensively presented here. György Németh gives a new interpretation for IG I³ 4 as for the intestines of sacrificial animals. From Emily Kearns we learn about the variety and the use of cakes, which occur often in sacrificial ritual (65-70), and Tullia Linders reconstructs the different menus of religious feasts at Delos out of the epigraphical invoices (71-79). In Gullög Nordquist’s paper a full orchestra of “Musicians in Greek Cult” accompanies celebrations (81-93). Fritz Graf’s comment on an oracle against pestilence, which orders a ritual with voodoo dolls, is published here in summary (95-96). A recently found *lex sacra* from Lykosoura/Peloponnese (Ioannis and Eveline Loucas, 97-99) prohibits the wearing of luxurious garments and gold jewelry within the sanctuary of the goddess Despoina; moreover pregnant women are excluded from initiation. Robin Hägg convinced Petros Themelis to give the first overview of the excavations of the sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia at Messene (101-122), the setting of female initiation rites.

Menelaos Christopoulos studies Erechtheus on the Athenian acropolis in three occurrences, as a distinct hero, as a by-name of Poseidon, and as the Erechtheian sea (123-130). The last two papers deal with curse tablets, a field in (non-)classical studies that has gained much interest in recent times. David R. Jordan treats late feasts for the ghosts (131-143) and Henk Versnel shows convincingly that the formula *pepremenos* in curse tablets could not have meant "sold", but "burnt by fire/fever" (145-154); and this fire lightens a torch to the next seminar, thanks to Robin Hägg.

Many illustrations provide further evidence; a thorough index of 26 pages enables the reader to find the many new details which are offered in this excellent and coherent volume. It should be part of every library with an interest in Greek religion.

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VASUDHA DALMIA and HEINRICH VON STIETENCRON (Eds.), *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*—New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995 (467 p.), ISBN 0-8039-9194-0 (hb.), £35.00.

In the aftermath of the arising of the form of political Hinduism associated with the Rāmājanmabhūmi campaign the possible impact of scholarship on the religio-political events in India has become a growing concern. The conference on which this collection of essays is based took place in October 1990 in a period when this style of political Hinduism seemed particular threatening. The editors criticize the concept of Hinduism as a coherent and unified system and argue that Hinduism was a nineteenth century creation which until recently remained an urban middle class phenomenon but which has been invoked lately by politicians to create a powerful religio-political Hinduism. While a few of the essays (Friedhelm Hardy on *Ācāryahrdayam*, Heinrich von Stietencron on *Somaśambhupaddhati*) detail pre-nineteenth century conceptions of religious identity, mostly the essays discuss nineteenth and twentieth century constructions, the most important essays being

Jürgen Lütt on the Maharaja Libel Case and the process of puritanization of Hinduism, Vasudha Dalmia on Vaiṣṇava self-representation in the late nineteenth century, Wilhelm Halbfass on the creation of social activist Vedānta in nineteenth century India, Sudipta Kaviraj on Bhudev Mukhopadhyay's indigenist social theory, and Monika Horstman on the concept of Hinduism promoted in the publications by the Gītā Press. The conclusions of several of the essays agree that "modern attempts at simplification and polarization [of Hinduism] have largely obscured the potential inherent in this complex and multifaceted tradition" (p. 32). The attempts to standardize and simplify the multiplicity of religious traditions of Hinduism were functions, it is argued, of the nationalization process of the nineteenth century which also involved factors such as the Christian critique of Hindu styles of worship, the Orientalist creation of a glorious spiritual past which focused on the *Samhitā*-s and the *Upaniṣad*-s, Advaita philosophy, etc. Attempts were made to transfer the uniformity which in the past belonged to the individual religious groups (*saṃpradāya*), to Hinduism as a whole. The most serious consequence of this simplification and uniformation, it is argued, was the creation of the idea of a uniform Hindu majority which has subsequently polarized India into two monolithic blocks. Responding to the claim that the way Hinduism has been and is represented by academicians has given support, consciously or not, to a certain form of political Hinduism, the papers try to give voice to forces in India of religious pluralism, decentralization, diversity, multiplicity, multidirectional trends, de-sanskritization, etc. The book makes the historians of religions aware of some possible and unintended political ramifications of their work. Simplifying Hinduism might unintentionally promote the homogenization of this religion, i.e., by not doing justice to the pluralism of the situation, the pluralism itself is weakened.

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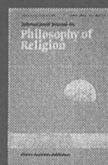
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